Hafa Adai!

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OPINION METER
This week's poll:

Do you intend to visit the Taste of the Marianas anytime this month?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

MAHARLIKA

MIFICPA officers are installed in a ceremony at the PIC Charley's Cabaret. ➤ PAGE 10

BUSINESS

Samsung's Galaxy line has emerged as the biggest competitor to the iPhone. ➤ PAGE 13

LIFE & STYLE

It was an unfortunate night for Skylar Laine on "American Idol." ➤ PAGE 21

FROM FY 2008 TO FEBRUARY 2012

Fund spent $9M in professional fees

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

» Legal fees alone total $862K, excluding new bankruptcy lawyer

The NMI Retirement Fund spent a little over $9 million in professional service fees from fiscal year 2008 through the first five months of fiscal year 2012, over $862,000 of which was for at least seven different outside legal counsels. This is based on a report that the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations obtained from the Fund while reviewing the governor's reappointment of Sixto Igisomar to the Fund board.

Because the data is only up to February 2012, the legal fee for the Fund's newly hired bankruptcy lawyer Jeremy B. Coffey is not included, said EAGI Committee chair Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian).

Coffey's initial rate for his service was $1,000 an hour but this was lowered to $475 an hour, still needing court approval.

Moreover, the legal fees do not include those paid to in-house counsels, Cruz said.

The Senate EAGI panel asked the

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Only 189 govt officials file financial statements on time

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

» OPA sends email notifications in the absence of Finance's list of 'certified' required filers

Only 189 of more than 300 elected and appointed government officials expected to file their statement of financial interest failed to meet the initial May 1 deadline to do so, and some of them said they missed or "almost" missed this year's cutoff date because of a lack of advance notification in the mail, among other things.

Public Auditor Michael Pai, in response to *Saipan Tribune* inquiry, said 189 government officials filed their 2011 statement of financial interest as of 4:30pm on May 1, and 26 more filed theirs as of close of business on May 2.

There is, however, a 30-day grace period for the non-filers to be able to file their financial statement with OPA without incurring a $10 fine per day of delayed filing.

That grace period ends on May 31.

Rep. Trenton Conner (R-Tinian) said he usually gets an advance notification in the mail but that didn't happen this year. However, he

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FERDIE DE LA TORRE

The second floor of the two-story house of Chinese artist Lung Kung along Texas Road in Chalan Kanoa was destroyed after it was engulfed by fire shortly before noon yesterday.

Fire breaks out in CK

» Fire engulfs 2nd floor of 2-story building

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A fire of unknown origin struck the house of 75-year-old Chinese artist Lung Kung on Texas Road in Chalan Kanoa yesterday, just before noon.

No one was reported injured as Kung, the only person inside the house when the fire broke out, managed to get out when the blaze engulfed the second floor of the two-story building.

As of 5pm yesterday, arson investigators were still seen on the second floor of the house.

"Everybody's safe," Kung said, adding that the fire started in the unoccupied second floor of his house. He declined to speak further.

Kung's wife was at a nearby store when the fire happened shortly before noon. At least three others are renting one of the three rooms on the ground floor.

The fire immediately gobbled the en-

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Taste of the Marianas kicks off tonight. PAGE 3
Resolution vs lawmakers' switch from pension checks to salaries. PAGE 5

Local

USCIS notice: When to amend and when to submit new I-129CW petition

In a statement yesterday, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service said that it has received a number of inquiries lately about amending or changing an I-129CW petition for CNMI-only transitional "CW" workers. The following should help clarify the differences.

Amended I-129CW petition

The employer (petitioner) must submit an amended petition if there is any "material change" in the employment. Two examples of I-129CW petitions that require amended petitions are:

■ Someone purchases an existing business that has employees with pending CW applications. Although the business entity is the same, the new owner must submit an amended petition if it would like to keep those workers listed on the petition.

■ The job changes from part-time to full-time. If the petitioner originally advertised the job as part-time, an amended I-129CW petition would be required since the petitioner would need to demonstrate that it tried to hire a full-time worker rather than a part-time worker.

So, when there is a significant change in salary or any other form of compensation, or if the terms and conditions of employment are going to be different than what was on the original petition—the employer (petitioner) must file an amended I-129CW, whether the original petition was approved or is still pending. If the original petition is still pending, the employer should notify USCIS that it wishes to withdraw the original petition at the time it files the amended petition. To request a withdrawal of the original petition: Send a scanned copy of the letter via email to: CNMI.CSC@uscis.dhs.gov **OR** mail the original letter to: USCIS, California Service Center, ATTN: CW-1, P.O. Box 10698, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1098.

When filing an amended I-129CW, you select option "2f" in Part 2 of the petition. You must include the filing fee ($325). **Do not** submit another "education funding fee" ($150) or biometrics services fee ($85) if the beneficiary of the petition (the employee) is the same as the original filing and if both fees were paid with the original petition.

New petition

If you are hiring a new employee, you must submit a new I-129CW petition. A petitioner cannot "substitute" a worker on an existing petition.

You must include all the associated fees when filing a new petition.

Change in "Requested Action"

If absolutely necessary, the employer (petitioner) may request a change from "Grant of Status" to consular notification for any beneficiary (worker) on a pending I-129CW petition **without** filing a new or amended petition or submitting additional fees. (This is a request to change Part 2, Number 5 of the Form from option "a" to option "b"). Normally, this change would only be necessary if the beneficiary has an urgent need to leave the CNMI.

The petitioner should submit a letter, signed by the employer indicating that the beneficiary is going to consular process instead of remaining in the CNMI for a Grant of Status. The letter should include:

■ The beneficiary's name

■ The receipt number of the original petition (this is the number that begins with WAC)

Send the letter via email to: CNMI.CSC@uscis.dhs.gov as a scanned copy of the letter (preferably as a PDF) **OR** mail the original letter to USCIS, California Service Center, ATTN: CW-1, P.O. Box 10698, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1098.

NOTE: If you are requesting consular notification and would like the U.S. Department of State to be notified of the approval of the petition, you must submit a duplicate copy of the petition and all supporting documents to USCIS at the address noted above. If a duplicate copy of the petition is not provided, the beneficiary may face a delay in visa issuance abroad. ***(USCIS)***

Suspects in sex trafficking case remanded to US Marshal

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David A. Wiseman has remanded to the custody of the U.S. Marshal one of two suspects in a sex trafficking case.

At an initial court appearance Thursday afternoon, Wiseman ordered Yanchun Li to be detained, subject to a motion by his counsel for a detention hearing.

Wiseman set the arraignment for Tuesday, May 8.

The judge granted court-appointed counsel Mark Scoggins' request to appoint an interpreter for his client.

Wiseman unsealed the case. Assistant U.S. attorneys Rami Badawy and Garth Backe appeared for the U.S. government at the hearing.

Li and his co-defendant, Wei Lin, were indicted on a charge of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking and to benefit financially from a sex trafficking venture; three counts of sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion; and one count of financial benefiting from a sex trafficking venture.

The court has appointed a counsel for Lin, but no schedule for his hearing has been set yet.

Saipan Tribune learned that Lin is in jail for another criminal case.

Li and Lin allegedly conspired to recruit women from China on empty promises of jobs at a hotel on Saipan and then forced them to engage in commercial sex once they got here. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

UMDA, ex-chief financial officer reach settlement

United Micronesia Development Association Inc. and its former chief financial officer, Hiroyuki Saito, have reached a settlement in their legal dispute.

In a notice issued Thursday, U.S. Magistrate Judge of the District of Guam Joaquin V. E. Manibusan Jr. stated that a settlement between the parties has been achieved.

Manibusan said UMDA and Saito, along with their representatives and counsel, met with him for a settlement conference on April 27, 2012, that began at 9am and ended at 4:55pm.

The judge did not indicate in the notice the terms of the settlement. No other document relating to the settlement was filed in the district court yesterday afternoon.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona recently appointed Manibusan to serve as a mediator/settlement judge in Saito's lawsuit against UMDA.

Manglona issued the order after Saito and UMDA, through their counsels, agreed to hold a conference to settle their dispute.

Saito sued UMDA to compel the company to arbitrate their disputes. He alleged that UMDA terminated his employment effective immediately and without cause on Dec. 7, 2009. Saito claimed that UMDA's total outstanding liability to him under the terms of his renewed contract is at least $975,000.

In February 2011, the federal court granted UMDA's motion to dismiss Saito's lawsuit. The court agreed with UMDA's position that Saito does not adequately allege a breach of contract because he does not adequately allege the existence of any contract to be breached.

Saito then filed an amended complaint. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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Students earn cash and help a great cause

» NMI Crime Stoppers commercial and poster contests yield amazing talent

NMI Crime Stoppers held its 2nd annual "Create a Commercial" contest for high school students this spring and received high quality video entries from local students. First place group winners, submitted by Harrison Smith at the Northern Marianas Academy, earned $500. Salvi Villanueva's MHS team received $300 for second place; and Mona Indalecio's KHS team received $100.

Cash prizes were given to the students to reinforce the message that Crime Stoppers awards are given in cash to tipsters who provide anonymous tips on the hotline or website and that lead to an arrest.

Entries from the prior contest were submitted to Crime Stoppers International and have received International Media Awards for 30-second commercials at the last two annual CSI conventions. Submissions from this current contest will also be submitted. The ads will air locally on MCV, Channel 41.

Also this year, public and private middle school students on Saipan were contacted and asked to participate in a poster contest. Students created amazing works of art, both hand drawn and computerized. Posters were 11" x 17" in size, colorful, and informational. Some entries will soon be posted in various businesses around the island for the public to view and enjoy.

The cash awards were divided into two categories.

For the computer generated posters, all three winners were from Hopwood Jr. High School. First place $100 winner was Raegine Camacho, second place was Therese Tenorio for $50, and third place was Joyce Alfonso, $25.

For the hand drawn posters, winners were from Saipan International School and Hopwood Jr. High. First place winner was Ji Yoon "Janice" Jung, $100; second place, Lizelle Lim, $50; third place Angie Kim, $25; with Patrick Augustine getting an honorable mention.

CONTACT INFO
NMI Crime Stoppers Hotline: 234-7272 (PARA)
www.nmicrimestoppers.net
Cash rewards of up to $1,000 are paid for tips leading to an arrest.

The excitement was contagious as cash prizes were awarded at the KSPN studio on Tuesday, April 17. One first place winner said, "I've been working on my poster for more than two weeks!"

Crime Stoppers is appreciative of the support of the local community. There are many unsolved crimes in the CNMI, including the disappearance last year of the Luhk sisters, the recent brutal murder of Emie Romero, and the highly publicized rape in Garapan. These criminals remain free to this day, and Crime Stoppers is committed to continuing to work with law enforcement to bring all criminals to justice. One solid tip from the community to the Crime Stoppers hotline may be enough to allow DPS to solve these horrific crimes. This tournament allows the local program to function for an entire year with its entirely volunteer board. ***(PR)***

3 Eucon students advance in MathCourt tilt

Eucon International School students made it to the top spot during the Regional MathCourt competition last Saturday.

In the K-2 event Joanah Victoria B. Jimenez, a second-grader under the tutelage of Thess Miral, bagged the gold medal, while Allia Raine Pillarina, a first-grader under Samihna Kakuse's class, bagged the silver medal. Joy Esther Yan, a second-grader, landed in fourth place.

Eucon International School of Saipan harvested three awards among the top five in the K-2 division. Because of this, they were invited to join and compete in the higher division, 3-5 category, today at Dandan Elementary School.

In the 3-5 division, Eucon students did well in the room level competitions, with Victoria Nicole Santos (3rd grade) winning first place, James Reyes (4th grade) winning 3rd place, and Juancho Siasoyco, (4th grade) in fifth place. All of these awards in 3-5 division are from their room ribbon competitions and are all under the coaching of Nicole Blackwell.

This year was one of the biggest MathCourt competitions so far, with close to 900 students from different private and public school participating in the event. The competition challenges students' mathematical skills and prepares them to be future leaders.

The Eucon administration expressed its appreciation to all teachers, coaches, trainers, and parents as well as to MathCourt administrative team for their great effort in helping Eucon students reach their potential. ***(Eucon)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Joy Esther Yan, Joanah Victoria B. Jimenez, and Allia Raine Pillarina of Eucon International School show off the ribbon and medals they won in the Regional MathCourt competition held last Saturday.

Taste of the Marianas kicks off tonight

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority's flagship event, the Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival and Beer Garden, will kick off tonight at the American Memorial Park.

The event will be held every Saturday of the month, coinciding with the celebration of Tourism Month in the Commonwealth.

The perennial theme, "Tourism is Everybody's Business," emphasizes the critical role of each entity in the CNMI in the efforts to develop and enhance the islands' main industry.

Tonight's event will start off with the ribbon cutting ceremony for the monthlong celebration, followed by performances of cultural dancers and other performing groups.

Taste of the Marianas will feature 15 food concessionaires: Fiesta Resort & Spa, Hafadai Beach Hotel, Hyatt Regency, Pacific Islands Club, Canton Restaurant, Furusato Restaurant, Sierra Pearl Shakes, Capricciosa/Tony Roma's, D'Elegance Restaurant, Herman's Modern Bakery, Hula Girl/3's, Thai House Restaurant, Poon's Restaurant, Tropical Chill, and Coral Ocean Point.

There will also be three Beer Garden vendors: Pacific Trading Co., Marianas Pacific Distributors Inc., and the Northern Marianas Bartender Association.

MVA managing director Perry Tenorio said Thursday that the Taste of the Marianas will also feature outreach presentations, exciting competitions for the public, and on-the street interviews to get the word out that tourism is everybody's business.

Besides the Taste of the Marianas, other activities have been lined up for the Tourism Month, some of which are coordinated with partners such as the Korean Association and the Japan Saipan Travel Association.

For more information, call 664-3200 or 01 or visit www.mymarianas.com.

Fitial nominates 2 to BPL

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial nominated on Tuesday two new individuals to serve on the Board of Professional Licensing, a day after re-appointing one to the same board.

Fitial named Herman B. Cabrera and Candido I. Castro to each serve a six-year term as a member of BPL.

Their appointment requires the advice and consent of the Senate.

If confirmed, Cabrera will fill an expired seat by Francisco Q. Guerrero, and his term will expire on May 25, 2017. Cabrera, an architect, will represent Saipan on the board.

Castro, a surveyor, will also represent Saipan on the board. If confirmed, he will fill an expired seat by Mitch Aaron, and his term will expire also on May 25, 2017.

"The lieutenant governor and I are confident that Mr. Castro/Mr. Cabrera is qualified and will be an asset on this important board," Fitial said in two separate letters to Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota).

Last Monday, the governor renominated both NMI Retirement Fund board chair Bernadita C. Palacios and trustee Marian DLG. Tudela, a few days after recalling the renomination of former Fund board chair Sixto Igisomar so he could re-appoint him.

The Fund has lost its quorum as Palacios and Tudela's terms expired on Thursday and yesterday.

Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian), chairman of the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations, said yesterday that the panel has yet to schedule a public hearing on Palacios and Tudela's reappointments.

Fitial also renominated on the same day Roman S. Demapan to serve another six-year term on BPL representing Saipan.

HEALTH WALK
MAY 5, 2012
LIVE HEALTHY:
Life Walk
with
PSS
Registration Information:
Saipan: 5:30am to 8:00am – 13 Fisherman Pavilion
Tinian: 6:00am to 8:00am – Tachog'na Beach
Rota: 6:00am to 8:00am – Joaquin M. Ogo Softball Field
– Dr. Rita Hocog Inos RJSHS
Original was designed in 2009 by Winona Blanco-Maratita
12th Grade Tinian High School

Bill could drive the Fund to liquidation— Villagomez

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund is opposed to a House bill that seeks to suspend employee contribution, saying the proposed legislation would "interfere" with the agency's efforts to collect contributions and could potentially drive the Fund to liquidation.

Fund administrator Richard S. Villagomez said that House Bill 17-296 will "further degrade the Fund's ability to emerge from the Chapter 11 proceeding with its payment obligations aligned with its funding level."

"If the funding level is further impaired by actions such as those proposed to be inflicted under H.B. 17-296, the ultimate level of payments to beneficiaries will have to be adjusted commensurately downwards or, worse yet, the Fund will reach the point where there is no option but liquidation," wrote Villagomez to Rep. Joseph M. Palacios, author of the bill.

Villagomez emphasized that liquidation "is not in the best interests of the CNMI or beneficiaries" as benefit payments will stop and those waiting to retire will not have a retirement system—"an outcome that would be devastating not just to current and future retirees but the entire CNMI."

According to Villagomez, the Fund filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy "to emerge from the process with a retirement system that is sustainable for the benefit of all members, retirees and active members alike."

The Chapter 11 proceeding, he said, resulted in "an automatic stay of actions harmful to the Fund."

"This protection is at the heart of the Chapter 11 process, and is intended to maximize the ability of financially distressed entities to use the tools provided under the Bankruptcy Code to reorganize for the benefit of their creditors and stakeholders," added Villagomez.

The administrator also noted that both H.B. 17-296 and H.B. 17-226, which would allow for the withdrawal of up to 50 percent of members' contributions to the defined benefit plan and now awaits the governor's action, "are violations of the automatic stay" and "clearly constitute an attempt to, inter alia, exercise control over the property of the Fund."

"We respectfully request that the Legislature cease and desist these actions, and the Fund must reserve all rights to pursue available remedies in federal court against any party whose actions constitute a violation of the automatic stay," said Villagomez.

He also argued that Section 3 of H.B. 17-296 "is nothing more than an effort to hide the true costs and results of this ill-advised legislation while preventing the Legislature from being held accountable in the future."

Last reminder about this weekend's play

The Friends of the Art's last play of the year is coming up! The Anthony Shaffer mystery, *Sleuth,* will be performed on May 5, starting at 7 pm, and on May 6 starting at 3 pm. These dates are one week later than originally planned and as announced in the season tickets.

The play will take place at the Dolphin Theater, Building T, at Marianas High School. The two-actor play is an entertaining mystery pitting Leo Goode, a veteran FOA performer and singer, against Bernard Rivera, who last performed with FOA in 2006 in *La Cage aux Folles.*

Leo played El Gallo in *The Fantasticks*, performed in *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change,* as Athos in *The Three Musketeers* and, most recently, quieted the audience singing *Gethsemane f*rom *Jesus Christ Superstar* in FOA's 2011 *Andrew Lloyd Weber: Beyond Memories production,* as well as performing in several other programs.

Ticket prices remain at $12 for FOA adult members, $15 for adult non-members and $8 for students and children over four years of age. Season ticket holders, of course, are prepaid.

Sleuth was awarded the Tony Award for Best Play and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Performance with Anthony Quayle and Keith Baxter from the original production cast. The play was adapted for film in 1972, starring Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine, and released again in 2007, starring Michael Caine and Jude Law in the role of Milo Tindle, originally played by Caine in the 1972 version.

Contact Frank Gibson at flgibson@yahoo.com for tickets or you can buy one at the gate. ***(PR)***

FUND

From Page 1

Fund to provide its expenses for professional services, including legal service fees, back in March.

Cruz received the data, dated March 20, 2012, from then Fund acting administrator Esther S. Ada. A copy of that Fund letter to the Senate EAGI Committee, along with other sets of documents, was obtained by *Saipan Tribune* this week.

"But I'm not satisfied with the data they provided. I was asking for a detailed, itemized data, but they provided only general figures. I don't care who they paid, but I wanted to know how many they paid, how much they paid and for what services," Cruz told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview.

Data provided by the Fund to the Senate panel shows the total amount spent on each of the six types of professional service fees in fiscal year 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and the first five months of fiscal year 2012 from Oct. 1, 2011 to Feb. 29, 2012.

These professional services include actuarial service fees, audit and accounting fees, financial consultant fees, investment management fees, legal service fees, and PCT custodial fees.

For legal fees alone, the Fund spent over $862,631.70 during the period under review, based on Fund's data.

Cruz, who was closely looking at legal service fees, requested from other sources a more detailed listing of Fund's expenditures, including those paid on a monthly basis to outside legal counsels.

He was able to see, for example, that monthly invoices for legal service fees range from $5,300 to $24,920, but this is based only on specific records from January 2010 to February 2012. Most of the monthly billings are in the $9,000 to $15,000 range.

Among the reasons cited by the EAGI Committee to recommend rejecting Igisomar's re-appointment were what Cruz described as the exorbitant legal fees and other professional service fees that the Fund has spent as well as its slow action to sue a businessman that provided it a defective software.

Cruz was referring to business Gary Sword, whom he said was sued by the Fund only this year when the Fund board already knew since 2010 that the software was defective.

The Senate held off acting on the EAGI Committee's report recommending rejection of Igisomar. However, shortly before the 90-day period lapsed on Igisomar's re-appointment, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial withdrew the nomination so he could re-appoint Igisomar.

When asked whether he would change his position on Igisomar's confirmation if and when Fitial resubmitted his name to the Senate, Cruz said, "Not likely."

Based on at least January 2010 to February 2012 data that Cruz gathered, the law firm of Camacho & Alepuyo, and later of Viola Alepuyo, the Fund board counsel, was paid over $325,000 in monthly legal fee/invoice.

The range of the monthly legal fee/invoice for the Camacho & Alepuyo law firm, and later to Viola Alepuyo, is from $7,155 to $23,540.

During the same period of January 2010 to February 2012, the Fund also paid for legal services provided by: Deborah E. Fisher, $5,300 in May 2010; Fisher Huesman LLC Trust Account, $15,000 in 2011; and the Law Office of Braddock Huesman, a total of over $46,000.

Former representative Diego Benavente, one of the directors of the Commonwealth Retirees Association, said the Fund spends too much on legal services but he recognizes there are lots of lawsuits that the pension agency has to deal with.

Cruz echoed this concern. He said the Fund could have used portions of that to pay actual benefits to retirees.

The Fund pays out $50 million to $60 million in annual benefits to retirees and their surviving spouses and other relatives. Cruz said there is one law firm that offers to charge the Fund only if and when it wins a lawsuit.

Esther S. Ada, then acting Fund administrator, told Cruz in a two-page letter that the Fund has consistently decreased its total expenditures in professional fees, with a few exceptions.

She said actuarial service fees increased significantly between 2008 and 2009 because the actuary, at the Fund's request, provided additional services to determine the impact of pension reforms that were being contemplated to sustain the viability of the Fund, most of which were at the request of the Legislature pursuant to Public Law 15-70.

"In addition, legal service fees covered services from at least seven different outside legal counsels whom the Fund retained to handle an increase in lawsuits involving the Fund as well as the services of the administrative hearing officers tasked by the Fund to resolve a backlog of cases under administrative appeal," Ada told Cruz.

In fiscal year 2008, total professional fees were over $2.5 million, $2.1 million of which was for combined financial consultant fees and investment management fees, and $121,470.19 for legal service fees.

Ada said investment management fees, which are paid as a percentage of assets under the management of the money managers, show a steady decline indicative of the decrease in the number of money managers as well as the Fund's asset portfolio as the pension agency continues to withdraw funds to pay pension benefits and operational expenses to cover the shortfall in the remittance of employer contributions from the CNMI government.

Financial consultant fees for 2008 and 2009 were incorporated into the investment management fees and were not segregated out until 2010.

In 2009, total professional services went down a bit to over $2.2 million. Of this, $1.7 million was for financial consultant fees and investment management fees and $208,670.48 was for legal service fees.

The following fiscal year, professional fees also totaled over $2.2 million. Financial consultant fees were at $99,195.08, while investment management fees were over $1.57 million. Legal fees totaled $264,611.74.

In 2011, total professional service fees were over $1.988 million, of which $1.3 million was for investment management fees, $226,339 for financial consultant fees, and $191,469 for legal fees.

For the first five months of 2012, professional services fees totaled $143,149.92. Of this amount, legal service fees totaled $76,409.72; financial consultant fees, $33,629.03; and investment management fees, $12,539.59.

FINANCIAL

From Page 1

was able to meet the deadline by going to OPA on Capital Hill in the afternoon of May 1 to request a blank statement of financial interest form. He filled out the form and submitted it to OPA within minutes.

Many government officials filed their 2011 statement of financial interest on the day of the initial May 1 deadline. Among them were Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos and at least six lawmakers.

Pai said the first 2011 financial statement received by OPA was filed by a Marianas Public Land Trust board of trustees member on Jan. 26, 2012.

Under the Government Ethics Code Act, the Department of Finance is required to send the Office of the Public Auditor a list of individuals it has certified to be among those required to file a statement of financial interest.

Based on that Finance list, OPA would send notices to the individuals required to file a statement to remind them of such requirement and the deadline.

This year, however, OPA did not get such a certified list from Finance. Finance Secretary Larrisa Larson's office has yet to respond to media inquiry about the absence of such list for the 2011 filing.

Pai said in the absence of the certified list from Finance, OPA sent a notice via e-mail on March 6, 2012, advising all appointed/elected CNMI officials, boards, councils/task force members or directors, commissioners, executive directors, managing directors, deputy directors, and administrators to file their statement of financial interest on or before the May 1 initial deadline.

As to whether officials received or acknowledged that email notification is another thing, some lawmakers said.

The certified list from Finance is supposed to inform OPA of those individuals who have been appointed to, and those who have resigned, from certain positions so that OPA can properly inform them individually of their responsibility to file a statement of financial interest.

In previous years, the number of certified required filers was always more than 300.

Pai said for 2011, Finance requested OPA's assistance in sending out a request to all agencies, departments, divisions, boards, commissions, councils, and task forces to provide Finance with an updated listing of their present organization.

"The information from these agencies, departments, divisions, boards, commissions, councils, and task forces enables the DOF to develop an accurate list of those officials who need to file a statement for calendar 2011 as required by the Act. The updated listings received by OPA were forwarded to DOF for review and certification. However, OPA has not received the certified list from DOF," Pai told *Saipan Tribune.*

Pai reminds government officials about the end of the 30-day grace period.

"OPA would like to remind all individuals who know that they are required to file a statement to please do so before May 31, 2012. Free notary service is available at OPA for this purpose," he said.

Under 1 CMC Section 8511 of the Government Ethics Code Act, all elected and appointed CNMI officials, judicial officers, and executive department heads or directors are required to file a statement of financial interest. The statement includes government officials' income, and financial interests in real estate, among other things.

Unlike many other jurisdictions and countries, CNMI law does not make public financial statements. The assets and liabilities of elected officials are not readily available for public inspection. OPA can only release the documents with the consent of the filer.

FIRE

From Page 1

tire second floor, which was made of light materials. Firefighters managed to stop the blaze from spreading to the ground floor and an adjacent two-story concrete house.

The ground floor sustained water and smoke damage.

Only a few of the many tropical fishes that Kung was raising in aquariums on the ground floor died from the incident.

Kung, an artist who has been on Saipan for 30 years now, used to own King Sign from 1983 until it closed in 2010. Many of his paintings survived the fire.

Kung's son, who asked not to be identified, said he was in Garapan when he received a call from a friend that his parents' house were on fire. He said he immediately proceeded to Chalan Kanoa at noon where he saw several fire trucks at the scene and flames engulfing the second floor of the building.

He said he later saw his parents near the house watching as firefighters tried to extinguish the blaze. He said firefighters managed to kill the blaze around 2pm.

A member of a family that owns the adjacent house said their two air-conditioners were damaged and three windows had cracks.

The family member said he was on the computer inside his room when he noticed smoke coming from his neighbor's house. When he came out to check, he saw thick smoke and fire spreading on the second floor of his neighbor's house.

This incident is the latest of a string of fires that hit Saipan in the last few months. On April 16, a fire razed to the ground two houses and also engulfed the interior of an adjacent house along Ellegh Avenue in San Jose.

No one was reported injured as most of the occupants were either at work or in school when the blaze broke out past 1pm.

Last April 12, a fire struck the Islander Club behind the Gold Beach Hotel on Pupulu Drive in Garapan. No one was reported injured in the blaze as the club was closed when the fire of unknown cause broke out.

Bush fires swept a big area and burned several banana plants at the former Botanical Garden in Papago last April 10 and 11.

Resolution vs lawmakers' switch from pension checks to salaries

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) prefiled Wednesday a resolution objecting to lawmakers who now want to go back to receiving their salary as legislators after waiving it to receive their retirement benefits instead, but some lawmakers expressed opposition to such measure not because they are personally affected but because they said anyone is entitled to receive his salary and forego pension.

Manglona's Senate Resolution 17-86 may be acted on during their next session on May 8.

"The Senate strongly disapproves that any legislator changing their position to receive their salary in lieu of their retirement fund benefits and diverting much needed funds from scholarship program," the resolution reads.

Some lawmakers said yesterday that Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (R-Saipan) is among—if not the only—lawmaker/s to be affected by Manglona's resolution. Reyes did not return calls as of press time.

Manglona said some members of the Legislature, pursuant to 1 CMC 8841, have waived their salaries so that they may continue to receive their retirement benefits and have their salary paid to the Scholarship Trust Account.

But after the NMI Retirement Fund filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, some members of the Legislature "desire to reverse their decision and now receive their salary in lieu of their retirement fund benefits."

"The legislators who have elected to continue receiving their retirement benefits should endure the same threat of loss or reduction in benefits as other Retirement Fund beneficiaries," Manglona said.

But Reps. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) and Froilan Tenorio (Cov-Saipan) separately said yesterday that Reyes and others who may be in the same situation should be given the option to revert to receiving their salaries.

"That should be his discretion. He's entitled to his payroll but he elected not to receive it, and now he wants to receive it. What's wrong with that?" Torres asked.

Manglona said that when some 2,000 retirees are "concerned about paying their mortgages and putting food on the table because of the bankruptcy some lawmakers are looking for parachutes to save their own lives."

"For me, it's disappointing," he said, referring to individual bailing out during the Fund crisis instead of working as a lawmaker to cushion the impact for the majority if not for all—retirees or active Fund members.

He said in his resolution that the reversal of decision so that some lawmakers may now receive their salary will reduce anticipated funding to the Scholarship Trust Account.

Tenorio, who elected to stop receiving his pension as a former governor to receive his salary as a lawmaker, said that Reyes or any other lawmaker who now want to receive their salary as lawmakers after waiving them to receive pension should be allowed to do so.

"I don't understand why the Senate president is against that. Why doesn't he introduce a bill instead of a resolution? What good is a resolution? Senator Manglona knows that the law allows those like Reyes to go back to receiving their salary as lawmaker," Tenorio added.

Tinian's Mendiola-Long is selected to attend National Leadership Academy

The Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies has selected Tinian's Phillip Mendiola-Long to attend the National Leadership Academy for Elected and Appointed Officials from May 6 -7 in Washington, DC.

Mendiola-Long is a current U.S. Department of Commerce appointee for the Obama Administration for the Hawaii Pacific Export Council representing the Northern Mariana Islands and he is also the current president and chairman of the Tinian Chamber of Commerce.

Mendiola-Long

Established in 1999, the two-day National Leadership Academy provides Asian American and Pacific Islander elected and appointed officials with intensive nonpartisan training needed to excel in their field as well as prepare them for opportunities to advance into higher office.

Over 90 elected officials have been accepted into the Leadership Academy since its inception.

There will be one track of nonpartisan advanced communications training for elected and appointed officials. A second nonpartisan track, which Mendiola-Long will be attending, will be for campaign managers and community leaders who are contemplating a future in public office.

The two-day program includes: Individualized training sessions led by policy experts, campaign strategists, fundraisers, online media specialists, and Members of Congress. Also included are networking opportunities with elected officials, political appointees, community leaders, and corporate sponsors and then finally meetings with national Democratic and Republican campaign committees.

Those who are eligible are all current and former elected officials of Asian Pacific American descent. Rare exceptions may also be made for candidates who are currently running or have made plans to run for political office in the near future. Mendiola-Long was selected as one of those "rare" non-elected exceptions, but according to Mendiola-Long he has no immediate plans to run for office.

"I am not going to say that I haven't thought of running for office, of course I have. In fact, many people are urging me to run for political office in this year's election. However, I don't think I am ready. Before I run for office, I want to be sure that I have all the training, all the tools, and as much of the knowledge necessary to create and offer the detailed solutions necessary to fix many of our island's problems we face today. I want to make sure I deliver on any promises I make to our people and right now, I need to make sure I have the tools to make good on that delivery and promise. This is why I think this Leadership Academy is vital for any political future I may have. But right now…"no"…I have no plans to run for political office this year or anytime in the next few years. Right now, I am 100 percent focused on learning as much as possible and I am honored to be one of the 10 people selected nationwide to attend this prestigious leadership academy," said Mendiola-Long.

Academy participants are also provided with a stipend to offset the costs of travel, lodging, and personal expenses, as well as complimentary tickets to the APAICS Annual Gala Awards Dinner and VIP Reception.

This year's National Leadership Academy is held in conjunction with the National Asian Pacific American Caucus of State Legislators and the Asian Pacific American Municipal Officials of the National League of Cities. The Academy will end with the hosting of the 18th Annual Gala Awards dinner, titled "Milestones: Journeying Forward," which will be held at The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, D.C. This event will be one of the largest gatherings of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, government and business leaders in the nation's capital.

APAICS was founded alongside the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus in 1994 by former Secretary Norman Y. Mineta and former Rep. Robert A. Underwood. ***(PR)***

REPUBLICAN PARTY
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

The Republican Party of the Northern Mariana Islands Association (RPNMIA) invites all its Proud Members to the

General Membership Meeting

AGENDA

1. Election of New Party Secretary
2. Election of National Committee Woman

WHERE: Party Chairman Benigno R. Fitial's Residence in Gualo Rai

DATE: Sunday, May 6, 2012

TIME: 4:00 p.m.

Paid for by the Republican Party of the NMI Association.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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Mission in Afghanistan isn't accomplished

President Obama won't lose any sleep over criticism that his address to U.S. troops in Afghanistan on the one-year anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death was political theater. Nor should he.

Obama's visit wasn't nearly the gaffe that a flight-suit-clad President George W. Bush made with his pre-election-year speech beneath a "Mission Accomplished" banner aboard the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln in 2003. Bush declared "major combat" in Iraq was over. But the worst was yet to come.

Hostilities in Afghanistan aren't anywhere near being over either. But what Obama had to say provided more evidence that he intends to adhere to a schedule that should have most U.S. troops out of that country within two years. He and President Hamid Karzai signed an agreement toward that end.

"Within this framework, we will work with the Afghans to determine what support they need to accomplish two narrow security missions beyond 2014: counter-terrorism and continued training. But we will not build permanent bases in this country, nor will we be patrolling its cities and mountains. That will be the job of the Afghan people," said Obama.

That's what most Americans want to hear. The public had become war weary before bin Laden was killed by Navy SEALs in a daring raid on his secret compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Now that the original reason for invading Afghanistan—to capture or kill the initiator of the 9/11 attacks—is no longer valid, most people (78 percent in the last Fox News poll) want U.S. troops to come home.

The 10-year war has taken the lives of more than 1,900 American soldiers and left more than 12,000 wounded, with most of those casualties occurring since 2009. A nation that is still trying to shake off a recession is currently spending $289 million a day in Afghanistan, and has spent $634 billion there since 2001.

Such sums will matter in a presidential election pundits are predicting will be all about the economy. But Obama knows he can't just leave Afghanistan. He's trying to gain some assurance that it won't revert to the same haven for terrorists that drew bin Laden. In that regard, he noted that direct discussions with the Taliban to broker a lasting peace are ongoing.

Obama was careful not to prematurely declare a victory that has yet to be achieved. He narrowly defined his version of victory—"to defeat al-Qaida and deny it a base to rebuild"—and then said only that the goal was "within reach." He pledged that the United States will remain Afghanistan's partner far into the future, but he made no specific military commitment.

That so much is unknown is in great part due to the murkiness surrounding Karzai's government, which has yet to reach a level of competency that instills confidence in its ability to prevent the Taliban from taking over again after U.S. troops leave.

As if to make that point, suicide bombers killed seven people near Kabul just hours after Obama had left the capital. A Taliban spokesman said the attack was "a message for Obama." More messages can be expected.

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A universal digital library is within reach

By PAMELA SAMUELSON
Los Angeles Times

Pamela Samuelson is a professor at the UC Berkeley School of Law and faculty director of the law school's Berkeley Center for Law & Technology. She wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

Since 2002, at first in secret and later with great fanfare, Google has been working to create a digital collection of all the world's books, a library that it hopes will last forever and make knowledge far more universally accessible.

But from the beginning, there has been an obstacle even more daunting than the project's many technical challenges: copyright law.

Ideally, a digital library would provide access not only to books free from copyright constraints (those published before 1923), but also to the tens of millions of books that are still in copyright but no longer in print.

Copyright law makes it risky to digitize these books without permission from copyright owners, and clearing the rights can be prohibitively expensive (costing on average, according to estimates, about $1,000 per book). Even if the money wasn't a problem, hundreds of thousands—and probably millions—of books are likely to be "orphan works" whose rights-holders are unknown or can't be found.

Google bumped up against copyright law in 2005, when lawsuits were filed by the Authors Guild and by a group of five publishers alleging that Google's scanning of books from major research library collections constituted copyright infringement. Google argued that scanning books to index their contents and make snippets available online was fair use, not infringement. But with its potential liability running into the billions or even trillions of dollars, Google was understandably receptive to overtures from the Authors Guild and publishers to settle instead of litigate.

A settlement announced in October 2008 would have given Google a license to keep scanning books and to help re-commercialize those that were out of print by running ads next to search results, selling books to consumers, and licensing digitized out-of-print books to libraries and other institutions. Google could have also displayed up to 20 percent of a book's contents in search queries.

But the proposed settlement fell apart in March 2011 when the judge overseeing the case ruled that it was unfair to the authors and publishers on whose behalf it had been negotiated, and that it would give Google "a de facto monopoly over unclaimed works." The proposal went far beyond the issues in litigation, he concluded, addressing matters "more appropriately decided by Congress" than through litigation.

But the dream of a universal digital library lives on. Now a coalition of libraries and archives has come together to create a Digital Public Library of America to fulfill the original vision of a digital library for all. It could well be that an effort without commerce in the mix will have an easier time of it.

A broad consensus already exists to remove copyright obstacles to orphan works. There is also growing interest in mass digitization of out-of-print works. The arguments for increased access are compelling: These books aren't producing any revenue for copyright owners, and most of them are unlikely to be reprinted. Libraries already own copies of many of them and want to make them available digitally to their communities. And rights holders can always opt out of a library mass-digitization project.

The U.S. Copyright Office recognizes that barriers to mass digitization need to be overcome. It proposed a partial legislative fix, which became the Orphan Works Act of 2008. The bill passed in the Senate, but then stalled in the House. Maria Pallante, who heads the Copyright Office, recently announced her interest in renewing this legislative initiative at a Berkeley Law conference on orphan works.

Meanwhile, the European Union is also working on a legal framework to allow greater access to orphan works. France has adopted legislation permitting libraries to mass-digitize books that aren't in print but are still in copyright. Germany is considering a similar proposal. Japan and Norway have authorized national libraries to undertake mass-digitization projects that even include in-copyright works. The U.S. should not lag behind.

Digital libraries containing millions of out-of-print and public domain works would vastly expand the scope of research and education worldwide, extending access to millions of people in undeveloped countries who don't have it now. It would also open up amazing opportunities for discovery of new knowledge. Being able to conduct searches over a corpus of millions of books allows researchers to learn things never before possible.

There are three promising strategies for removing barriers to a universal digital library: First, it should be considered "fair use" in copyright law for nonprofit libraries to circulate orphan works for their patrons for noncommercial purposes. Second, Congress should pass legislation to limit damages and injunctions for other reuses of orphan works. Third, the Copyright Office should explore a collective licensing program under which all in-copyright but out-of-print works could be made available, as some countries are now trying.

Workable solutions exist to fulfill the dream of a universal digital library. Do we really want to tell our grandchildren that we could have achieved this goal but lacked the will to do so?

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For older job-seekers, it's all about age, appearance, and attitude

By DR. STEPHEN A. LASER
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

While probably not politically correct, the fact is the Three A's—age, appearance, and attitude—have a major impact on the plight of the older, unemployed worker. If people think that these characteristics don't really matter when evaluating an applicant's chances of success in finding a job offer, they are mistaken. Studies have shown that, for better or worse, personal appearance and the ability to communicate clearly and convincingly are probably the two factors that predict best as to whether a person will ultimately land a job.

First let's talk about age. There are a number of reasons companies discriminate against older workers – some of them based on financial reasons and others grounded in deeply held biases lacking empirical support. On the financial side, employers are often worried about paying older, and likely more experienced, individuals higher wages. Obviously, the longer people have been in the workforce with greater education and job knowledge, the higher they expect to be paid for their talent and expertise. Hiring a younger person lowers a company's labor costs. There is also the widely-held notion that older workers are more likely to get sick, costing a company money in the face of fast-rising, healthcare expenditures. On the other hand, there is the misconception, unsupported by hard data, that older employees take more sick time. The opposite has been proven to the case as more mature employees are less likely to call-off sick and abuse personal time to take a long weekend or recover from a late night of partying.

Besides economic considerations there are prejudices about older employees and their ability to contribute in a changing world. Many companies feel that with increased reliance on technical skills, especially the use of computers and social networking tools, older workers are from another era and age—more specifically, the Stone Age. While those who entered the workforce before computers were so prevalent might be behind the learning curve, computer skills and being savvy about social networking tools can be learned, often quickly and inexpensively at a local community college.

Among the issues biasing employers against older applicants are the concerns surrounding personal appearance—another unmentionable, taboo topic in today's politically correct climate. Whether we approve or not, studies have shown there is a bias in favor of thinner and more athletically fit applicants versus those that are overweight. In sum, attractiveness, in general, plays a significant part on the selection process. Despite all of the statements that appearance is on the outside and it's what's on the inside that counts, the fact remains that personal appearance has a great deal to do with whether a person is hired, or even called back for a second round of interviews.

Does appearance matter? Well, it depends. For jobs where there is a high degree of contact with the public or a company's customer base, it can be more of a factor than some would like to admit, especially when first impressions count in furthering a company's cause, like getting a foot in the door for a sales rep. For example, my cardiologist looks like an Olympic high hurdler leaping over desks and examining tables as he sprints into the waiting area to greet the tall, leggy blond offering the latest samples of the her company's cholesterol-reducing medicine. However, for jobs that would be classified as individual contributor roles, physical appearance is not terribly relevant. Unfortunately, job interviews involve making favorable first impressions, and hence no matter how isolated the position being advertised, the ability of the applicant to impress an interviewer is an important factor in getting hired.

Finally, there is the matter of attitude. Angry, resentful, and bitter job applicants do little to help their cause. All too often the interviewer or HR representative at the company gets the full brunt of the applicant's anger and annoyance with their raw deal from a previous employer along with the natural frustration of a person's prolonged job search. While at the end of the meeting the candidate might feel relieved and momentarily purged, the poor company representative is bewildered, not knowing what to think.

In other instances a person's attitude is primarily a reflection of their sense of defeatism over the whole job search process. There is no question that it is a grind. A hang-dog attitude that fails to inspire a sense of energy and optimism in the employment interviewer will likely lead to a self-fulfilling prophesy and another rejection letter or rebuff by email or voice message. It should come as no surprise that one of the leading causes of burnout with any activity results from trying so hard to succeed with little return for one's efforts. Thus, it is important to find ways to keep your spirits up and maintain a positive attitude in the face of rejection.

Counterproductive attitudes can also be apparent when an applicant makes it clear that the job being offered is far beneath the person's experience level and expertise. On other occasions, bad attitudes emerge when older workers find themselves being interviewed by people the same age as their children, and their resentment is palpable. Remember, it is not the fault of the interviewer or the entry-level HR rep that he or she is young. It obviously becomes a red flag to a potential employer if the job candidate cannot seem to get along with younger coworkers. Finally, it is easier said than done in terms of maintaining your cool when the applicant draws interviewers or HR reps who are arrogant, disrespectful, or harboring obvious signs of ageism in their attitudes.

Of course age, appearance, and attitude are not all unrelated to each other. The older worker may or may not have made an effort to stay fit. Moreover, those same effects of aging and appearance also hurt one's self-esteem and adversely impact a person's attitude. Furthermore, extra weight or graying (or no) hair make a person look and feel older. Finally, feeling defeated and depressed can add years to your personal appearance and also lead to unhealthy behaviors like overeating. In other instances, there are even unhealthier behaviors, like alcohol abuse which deteriorate appearance and take its toll.

While no sure-fire ways exist to eliminate all of the effects of aging, appearance, and attitude, there are proven techniques that can mitigate their impact. The key, of course, is to maintain a level of self-discipline to feel better about your appearance and have a healthier and more productive attitude, which, in turn, will allow you to be viewed as a more viable job candidate. In the end, the onus is on you to show that you can contribute to an organization's survival and growth in a period of difficult economic times.

Stephen A. Laser, PhD has over 30 years of experience as a business psychologist. He founded and manages a Chicago-based consulting firm specializing in advising clients on hiring employees. He is the author of Out-of-Work and Over-40: Practical Advice for Surviving Unemployment and Finding a Job. *For more information, visit www.laserassociates.net.*

A mess in China that could yet end well

By TRUDY RUBIN
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer. *Readers may write to her at:* Philadelphia Inquirer, *P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by e-mail at trubin@phillynews.com.*

No screenwriter could have dreamed up the saga of the blind Chinese human-rights lawyer Chen Guangcheng, a story so dramatic that it threatens to upend U.S.-Chinese relations—but offers China's leaders a unique chance to promote legal reforms.

Here's the saga so far: Chen angered local officials by helping the villagers of Linyi, who were protesting illegal forced abortions. After years of brutal mistreatment by local officials, during which he became a Chinese—and international—human-rights hero, Chen made a dramatic escape from unlawful house arrest. He took refuge in the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, just before Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton arrived this week for high-level talks.

Chen wanted to remain in China, to work for reforms. So U.S. officials negotiated a deal to permit the self-taught lawyer to finally attend law school and ensure his and his family's safety. The U.S. ambassador accompanied him to a hospital, where he was reunited with his family; Clinton publicly called on China to keep its commitments.

But once in the hospital, Chen panicked, saying he had learned that Linyi government thugs had threatened to beat his wife to death. He said he'd been misled and now feared for his life, and wanted to leave China; he appealed to President Obama.

Clinton, in Beijing to talk about trade, Syria, and Iran, faces a human-rights crisis, as does Obama. So do China's leaders, who will confront an international outcry if they harm or detain Chen.

Yet—if U.S. and Chinese officials can handle the Chen affair wisely—this story could still, just possibly, end well.

To understand why, a little history is needed. Chen, who comes from a poor background, was never a dissident, but rather a crusader for Chinese officials to obey their own laws.

By the time he emerged in the mid-1990s as a leader of the battle against forced abortion and sterilization, national Chinese laws had already ruled out such practices. But many local officials refused to jettison their use.

In the last decade, corrupt and illegal behavior by local party bosses has become a scourge that undermines China's development. It has led to a growing number of protests across the country against unlawful land seizures and staggering corruption at local and regional government levels.

Public-interest lawyers—a small but courageous breed—have tried to help peasants protest such practices. In trips to Beijing, I've met with law professors and students working on projects to help farmers being defrauded of their land.

But divisions within China's top leadership have hampered any campaign to rein in local officials. Those who promote rule of law are labeled dissidents; too often, it is the public-interest lawyers who are jailed.

However, the rule-of-law issue has emerged front and center as China heads toward a once-in-a-decade shift in leadership this fall.

The spectacle of unlawful behavior by local party bosses exploded publicly with the messy downfall of Bo Xilai, a powerful party chief in the city of Chongqing and a rising political star. He is now being investigated for massive corruption and possible family involvement in the murder of a British businessman.

Some political reformers hoped the fall of Bo would embolden would-be political reformers in the present and future party leadership to come into the open. No signs yet.

However, there's been one recent, hopeful signal. The most powerful Communist official in Guangdong province, Wang Yang, backed the villagers of Wukan, who were protesting against illegal landgrabs. He made clear this signaled a demand for better local governance.

Now comes the case of Chen Guangcheng—which could offer political reformers a golden chance.

"The ultimate question leaders of China have to confront is lawlessness," says New York University professor Jerome Cohen, the top U.S. expert on the Chinese legal system. "The party has encouraged rule of law, and increased the rights consciousness of the masses" but in practice has punished those who tried to obey the law.

Cohen knows Chen well; he spoke to him at length by phone while he was in the embassy. "Chen wanted to use the system," Cohen says. "He wasn't calling to change party rule, but for them to put their money where their mouth is" on the rule of law. The smart move for Chinese party leaders would be to make the blind lawyer into a symbol of the need to curb lawless local officials—like Bo Xilai.

"With new leadership coming in China, this could be an opportunity," Cohen continued, "for a cluster of (top Chinese) leaders . . . to say, 'The people of China are ready for a better legal system, and we've failed to respond as we did with opening up the economy.'" Cohen hopes Chen's case could galvanize Chinese leaders to take such action.

But the blind lawyer won't be safe unless Obama and Clinton insist that China guarantee his and his family's security and freedom, or let them leave the country.

After all, Chen Guangcheng is a true Chinese patriot, promoting the rule of law his country needs to prevent aggrieved peasants from taking to the streets.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds around 10 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds around 10 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼76°	▲88° ▼76°	▲88° ▼76°	▲88° ▼76°	▲88° ▼76°

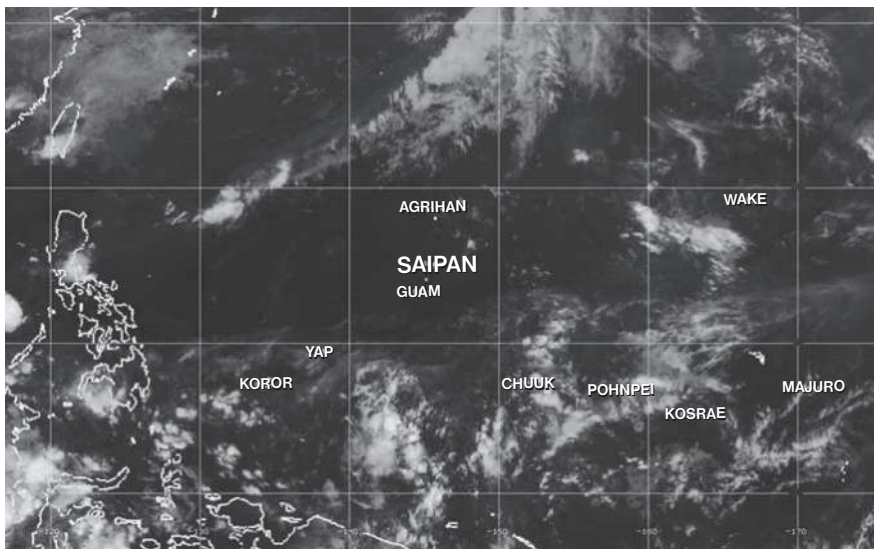
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲88	▼80
Palau	Mostly Sunny	▲87	▼76
Yap	Showers	▲91	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲89	▼79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲86	▼78
Kosrae	Showers	▲86	▼79
Majuro	Showers	▲87	▼79

Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲63	▼54
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲82	▼56
Hong Kong	Thundershowers	▲81	▼78
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲81	▼71
London	Partly Cloudy	▲48	▼39
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲74	▼56
Manila	Thundershowers	▲91	▼83
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲60	▼46
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼71
New York	Showers	▲70	▼54
Osaka	Showers	▲71	▼55
Paris	Cloudy	▲53	▼43
Pusan	Sunny	▲67	▼57
Rome	Showers	▲66	▼56
Salem	Mostly Sunny	▲58	▼40
San Francisco	Sunny	▲69	▼54
Seoul	Sunny	▲70	▼48
Tokyo	Sunny	▲74	▼59
Washington, DC	Thundershowers	▲79	▼61

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, FRIDAY, MAY 4, 2012

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front stretches southwestward from near Iwo To island at 25N142E to beyond 130E at 20N. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are found along and up to 100 miles northwest of this boundary. Converging winds ahead of the front are generating scattered showers north of the Marianas between 25N and 23N from 142E to 148E. A weak monsoon trough extends eastward from 4N130E through a circulation centered southeast of Yap near 5N144E then turns southeastward to end at 1N147E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring south of Koror and Yap between 6N and the equator from 134E to 145E. A trade-wind disturbance is triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms over Pohnpei between 11N and 6N from 157E to 165E and mainly south of Kosrae between 6N and the equator from 160E to 167E. A surface trough runs southwestward from 10N153E to 1N149E. Scattered showers are located south of Chuuk within 70 miles of a line from EQ150E to 6N154E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

1:30 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.7 Feet
7:08 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
2:05 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
8:41 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	5:52 AM	6:36 PM
Sunday	5:52 AM	6:36 PM
Monday	5:51 AM	6:36 PM
Tuesday	5:51 AM	6:36 PM
Wednesday	5:50 AM	6:37 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:41 PM	4:38 AM
Sunday	6:47 PM	5:32 AM
Monday	7:52 PM	6:30 AM
Tuesday	8:56 PM	7:31 AM
Wednesday	9:56 PM	8:34 AM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 6, 2012

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)			
C05062	2:40am	3:10am	1, 5
ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)			
UA5062	3:40am	4:15am	1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)			
UA5062	4:50am	5:40am	1, 5
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA5074	11:30pm	12:20pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5076	3:10pm	4:00pm	Daily
UA5078	6:50pm	7:40pm	Daily
UA5072	9:55pm	10:45pm	Daily
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)			
DL287	6:05am	8:50am	Daily
DL297	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)			
OZ606	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:30pm	6:55pm	Daily
SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)			
OZ606/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/191	4:35am	9:55am	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:05am	10:15pm	Daily via NRT
UA5076/183	3:10pm	8:45pm	Daily via GUM
UA5076/193	3:10pm	10:25pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
OZ604/703	3:30pm	10:45pm	Daily via ICN
UA5072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
UA5072/PR111	10:05pm	7:50am+1	3, 6 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)			
OZ606/721	2:20am	11:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:50am	11:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5076/147	4:35pm	9:45pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/723	3:30pm	10:40pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)			
UA5062	3:40am	5:40am	1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)			
UA5064	4:15am	4:50am	1, 5
GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA5062	2:40am	4:15am	1, 5 via ROP
UA5071	7:10am	8:00am	Daily
UA5073	10:05am	10:55am	Daily
UA5075	1:45pm	2:35pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5077	5:25pm	6:15pm	Daily
UA5079	8:35pm	9:25pm	Daily
NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:15pm	12:50am+1	Daily
SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ603	8:50am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ605	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
DL172/288	8:05am	12:50am+1	Daily via NRT
UA190/5077	10:55am	6:15pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/5077	10:55am	9:25pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C05071	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
UA192/5071	9:45pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:25pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM
OZ704/603	11:45pm	2:20pm+1	Daily via ICN
HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ722/605	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
UA180/5076	10:35pm	8:00am+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

SCHEDULE OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am Chamorro, 9am English, 11am Filipino and 6pm English
Monday-Saturday: 6am Chamorro
Wednesday: 6pm Chamorro
Parish office hours:
Monday-Saturday
8am-12pm, 12-1pm, 1-5pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm (PH Novena 5:45pm)
Friday: 5:30pm praying of Divine Mercy Chaplet; 6pm devotional mass in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
Saturday: 6am and 6pm (anticipated)
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am 6pm Tagalog mass
Parish office hours: (Fr. Celso G. Magbanua) Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 8-11:30am/ 3-5:30pm, Wednesday and Friday 3-5pm.
Telephone no. 285-0273

Santa Soledad Mission Parish
Monday: 6pm
Tuesday: 6pm
Wednesday: 6pm
Friday: 6pm
Saturday: 6pm (Youth mass/ anticipated Sunday mass)
Sunday: 7am and 9am (Children's mass)
Parish office hours: Wednesday and Friday: 8-10am,
Saturday: 4-6pm
Telephone no. 256-4568

Saint Jude Parish
Monday- Friday: 6pm
Saturday: 7am
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Parish office hours: Monday-Friday 9:30-11:30am, 3:30-5pm
Office is close every Thursday and Saturday
Telephone no. 288-0007

San Antonio Parish
Monday-Friday 6pm
Saturday: 6pm
Sunday: 7am, 9am (Blessing of children)
Parish office hours: Tuesday-Saturday: 8-11:30am, 2-4:45pm
Close on Sunday and Monday

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am Chamorro, 8am English
Monday and Tuesday:6am Chamorro
Wednesday:6pm English
Thursday: 6am Chamorro
Friday: 6am English
Saturday: 6am Chamorro, 6pm Tagalog
Sunday: anticipated mass

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am, 8am, 10am
Monday-Friday: 7pm
Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Monday- Saturday: 6am daily mass
Monday- Sunday: 3pm Divine Mercy Chaplet
Wednesday: 6pm, mass, exposition of the blessed sacrament
Saturday: 6pm, anticipated Sunday mass
Sunday: 7:30-9am English, 6pm Tagalog mass
Office hours: Monday-Wednesday: 9am-12pm, 2-5pm
Thursday: day off
Friday- Saturday: 8am-12pm, 2-5pm
Telephone no. 234-6991

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 7:30am Chamorro, 9am English
Monday: 6pm English
Tuesday: 6pm English
Wednesday: 6pm English- novena mass to our Lady of San Roque oil
Thursday: 6pm English
Friday: 6pm English- Devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus (First Fridays)
Saturday: 6am English- Our Lady's Saturday mass for the intentions of the Men and Women in military service, 6pm English- anticipated mass
Parish office hours: daily except Thursday and Sundays: 4:30-6pm
Telephone no. 322-2404, Fr. Bong's cell: 285-912, Diocesan Finance office: 234-3000 ext.143

San Vicente Parish
Monday-Friday: 6pm,
Saturday: 6pm (First Saturday of every month)
Sunday: 6am anticipated mass, 6pm (Neo Catechumenal community mass), 8pm
Sunday: 6am, 9am, 6pm
Parish office hours: daily 9-11am
Telephone no. 235-8208 or 287-0131

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 8am
Monday: 6pm (1st Mondays cemetery masses at 5:30pm)
Tuesday- Friday: 6pm
Saturday: 6pm-anticipated Sunday mass 8-10pm
Parish office hours: Monday- Friday: 8:30am-12pm

PROTESTANT

Amen Church
Sunday : 10am, 1pm, 5pm Wednesday : 7pm Friday Prayer : 9pm Bible Study : 4pm (Tue) Music Practice : 5pm (Sat)
Korean class: 3:30pm (Thu) Visitation : 10am(Fri, Sat) Outreach : 8am (First Sat)
Tel. No. 285-2121, 256-2221 Email : oseyo@daum.net

Born Again Christian
(Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm
Telephone no. 234-6026/27

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services:
Sunday: Chinese and Filipino 9am, English 6pm
Bible Study: Wednesday and Saturday 8pm
Telephone no. 235-8540

Church 360
Suite 103 of Marianas Business Plaza (1st floor of former Nauru Building).
Contact www.church360saipan.org, info@church360saipan.org, or call 888-2116
Celebration Service: Sundays at 10:15am
Prayer Fellowship: Thursdays at 6:30pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Morning Service, Sunday, 10:00 am
Evening Service, Sunday, 6:00 pm
Children Sunday School, 10:00am/ 6:00 pm
Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, 7-9 pm
Youth Night of Worship, Friday, 6:30 pm
As Perdido Road
Chalan Piao, Saipan MP 96950
Tel. No. (670) 235-8590
Email: cornerstone@cfemcares.org

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 10:00am
Place: Garapan, Plumeria Road,
Call 285-6081 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 9-11am
Sunday school/ Children's church 9am (nursery available during Sunday service)
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: 6am Tuesday GCA Kagman, Wednesday Navy Hill, Thursday San Antonio
Home Cell Bible Study: 7pm (Through out the week)
Telephone no. 322-5680

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (English)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (Tagalog)
Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church
Chalan Kanoa Drive, Chalan Kanoa
(east of Town Center and Beach Road, Near Mt. Carmel Cathedral)
Worship Service: 9:00am
Children's Sunday School: 9:00am
Choir Practice: 8:00am
Singspiration: 8:30am
Prayer, Care & Share: Wednesday 7:00pm
Pastor: Millie Carroll 322-6158

Immanuel Methodist Church
(Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)
(Korean Congregation)
Sunday worship: 9am, 10:30, 1pm
Wednesday evening service: 8pm
Daily morning prayer: 5am

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
Sunday English Service: 7:30-9am,
Sunday Tagalog Service: 9-11am and 6-8pm,
Wednesday: 7:30-9pm

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9:20am
Sunday Adult: 11am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service: 10 am at Seventh Day Adventist church on Quartermaster Rd.
Wednesday Service: 7 pm at Fina Sisu Housing FS#1
Contact Nick for more info: 287-1661

Marianas Bible Fellowship Center
Sunday School: 9-9:30am
Divine Worship: 9:30-11am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Pentecostal Missionary Church of Christ (4th Watch)
Sunday worship 8:30am
Sunday evening 7:00pm
Prayer meeting, every Wednesday 7:30pm San Jose village, after San Jose Hotel
Telephone: 789-7566

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 10-11am
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 6-7pm
Thursday Bible Study: 7pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church Koblerville
Sunday services:
Sunday school 9:00am
Morning worship 10:00am
Evening service 6:00pm
Wednesday evening bible study 7:00pm

Chinese services
Sunday morning 10:00am
Sunday evening 7:00pm

Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church.
Telephone No: 285-4661/2

Thy Word Ministries Saipan
Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi

Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries
Sunday 5:30am-6:30am
Morning prayer
7am-9am English service
7am-9am Sunday school
10am-12noon English service, Koblerville
Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting
Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service
Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian
Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Victorious Christian Church
(Formerly God's Victorious Army)
Sunday 8:30am to 10:30am - Worship Service
Monday 7:00 pm - Women's Fellowship
Tuesday nights - Home cellgroup
Wednesday - 7:30pm to 9:00pm Mid Week Service
Friday 7:30pm to 9:00pm Prayer Meeting
Saturday nights - Praise and worship practice
Last Friday of the month - Overnight praying meeting
Pastor Brendon Perez - Tel# 2359246

Editor's Note: Information subject to change without prior notice. All information provided by the respective churches. If you want your church or religious activities included or to report changes and errors, call *Saipan Tribune* at 235-6397 or 235-2440 or email editor@saipantribune.com.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

May 5, 2000

Landfill team delivers progress report to Legislature
With approximately 80,000 tons of waste created each year on Saipan, it is vitally important that the new Integrated Solid Waste Management System being designed for the Marpi Sanitary Landfill meet high standards for environmental quality. In fact, such a system for Saipan could become a model for other Pacific islands in the future. These were the recommendations made by the Department of Public Works (DPW) and its consultant Harding Lawson Associates (HLA) in a progress report to a joint session of the Commonwealth Legislature and Solid Waste Task Force. Lieutenant Governor Jesus R. Sablan, chair of the Solid Waste Task Force, stated that the landfill project is one of the Commonwealth's most important projects.

Pending loan applications swamp CDA
The Commonwealth Development Authority is currently swamped with issues that need to be addressed but could not be acted upon due to the suspension of its scheduled Board of Directors meeting yesterday for lack of quorum. CDA Board Chair John S. Tenorio said they had to postpone the regular monthly meeting, scheduled for yesterday, because the board member from Rota could not make it to Saipan. The government's prime lending arm has likewise suspended the regular board meeting for its Corporate Development Division Wednesday also due to lack of quorum.

May 5, 2003

High school cited for water violation
Saying that bacterial contamination is considered an "acute risk" to public health, the Division of Environmental Quality cited the Marianas High School for violating drinking water regulations, based on sampling tests conducted recently. DEQ acting director Pedro T. Palacios directed MHS principal James Denight to act swiftly on the matter, after sampling tests conducted on the school's public water system last April showed coliform contamination. In a document released by DEQ public information officer Therese Hocog, the environmental agency wants the school to conduct a complete disinfection of its water source, storage tanks and distribution system.

Part-time students to get scholarship
The current administration has identified some $750,000 scholarship grant for part-time college students. According to CNMI Scholarship Advisory Board chairman Roman Benavente, the money is part of the administration's $228 million proposed budget for 2004. "This is really the Governor and the Lt. Governor's desire to help part-time students. It's been their goal to provide such assistance to them," he said. Currently, the CNMI scholarship program only extends financial assistance to full-time students.

May 5, 2004

CHC has no radiologist
The Commonwealth Health Center now lacks a radiologist following the recent departure of its lone radiology specialist, Dr. David Southcott. The DPH administration has denied this but CHC staff members confirmed the absence of Dr. Southcott, when asked. "We don't have our radiologist here anymore," said a staff who agreed to speak on the condition of anonymity. DPH spokesman John Douglas, who was asked about the issue since last week, said Monday, "We're not aware of that [radiologist leaving]." Douglas, who left for an off-island trip yesterday, said he has asked administrative officials, including Public Health Secretary James U. Hofschneider about the issue.

PSS wants its cut of the alien funds
The Public School System believes it should get a share of the alien workers' funds, even as it supports the holding of a feasibility study on converting Marianas High School into a technical school. "I don't think that the Northern Marianas College should get all that [alien fees]," said Board of Education member Herman T. Guerrero in a meeting last week. The college is a major recipient of money coming from the fund, pursuant to public laws 5-32, 6-4, 7-21, Executive Order 94-3, and Public Law 10-66. Other recipients are the municipal governments and other government agencies. The Nonresident Workers Act is a major source of revenue for the government, which collects from employers $225 for each guest worker they have. The fee is collected each year.

Maharlika

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Consul General Medardo Macaraig, seated fifth from left, leads the team that conducted the mobile consular services at the Northern Marianas College Rota campus last April 28 and 29. With the team are members of the Filipino community on Rota.

Consulate holds last mobile services on Rota

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Philippine Consulate General on Saipan held its last mobile consular services on Rota on April 28 and 29, a week after conducting it on the neighboring island of Tinian.

Consul General Medardo Macaraig led the team that held the mobile consular services at the Northern Marianas College Rota campus.

Joining Macaraig were consulate staff Jose Sto. Domingo, Rowena Tolosa, Liza Dean, Hazel Manahan-Mendoza, Antonio David, and Antonette Ocon.

The team rendered a total of 285 services during the event. Of this number, 92 were for passports, one passport extension, five reports of birth, two special powers of attorney, two certifications, one affidavit, 76 Overseas Workers Welfare Administration memberships, and 106 applications and other related services for overseas absentee voting.

The number of services saw an increase of almost 64 percent compared to the numbers from the October 2011 mobile consular services.

"The consulate extends its deepest appreciation to the people of Rota for their warm reception and support," said Macaraig in a statement.

Macaraig thanked everyone who made all the consular services on Rota "extremely successful," including Mayor and Mrs. Melchor Mendiola, Alejandro Badilles, Fr. Charlie Borja of San Francisco de Borja Church, Ofelia Atalig, Gina Sasakura, Ruby Traya, and Maria Luz "Emith" Sta. Teresa.

He requested that the same reception and support be extended to the officers and staff of the Philippine Consulate General in Guam, which will take over the responsibilities of the Saipan Consulate after its last day on Oct. 31.

Citing budgetary constraints, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs decided that the Saipan Consulate General will be among the posts that will be closed down within the year.

In an interview yesterday, Macaraig said he confirmed with Filipinos on Rota that the closure will proceed as scheduled and that the only factor that can affect the decision to shut down the Saipan Consulate is the petition calling for its retention.

Copies of the petition, spearheaded by the United Filipino Organization and with some 5,300 signatures from Filipinos in the CNMI, were sent to top Philippine government offices and are currently being followed up by Manila-based UFO members.

Macaraig, however, assured the Filipino community on Rota that the Guam Consulate will carry on the mobile consular services not just to their island but to Saipan and Tinian as well at least once a year initially.

The frequency of these mobile consular services, he said, can be increased should the need arise in the future.

Macaraig also pointed out that he will be nominating honorary consuls from each of the three islands. These names have yet to be submitted to DFA pending receipt of pertinent documents from the nominees.

New president aims to sustain MIFICPA resurgence

» 2012 officers inducted last week

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

Noli Santos, newly inducted president of the Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants, vowed Thursday to revive the organization and make it active in the island community once again.

Santos and the rest of the 2012 officers of MIFICPA were installed in a ceremony at the Pacific Islands Club Charley's Cabaret last Saturday. Over 80 members and guests attended the ceremony.

Besides Santos, the new officers are Butch Ordas Jr., vice president - internal; Leila Hicaro, VP – external; Janice Joy Suguitan, secretary; Celia Vales, treasurer; Jocelyn Doreza, auditor; Marlon Estigoy, business manager; Rodolfo Urbano, public relations officer.

The board of directors is composed of Aileen Indino, Robert Reyes, Gerardo De Guzman, Edgar Genobaten, Adoracion Manibusan, Irene Santiago, Antonio Abantao, Ma. Luisa Paniegra, and Ignacio "Jhun" Bañadera who is the founding president of MIFICPA.

All officers were elected to their positions way back in August 2011 but the induction was pushed back to this month due to the immigration uncertainties that affected the organization's members.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The newly inducted officers of the Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants pose for a photo after their installation ceremony held at the Pacific Islands Club Charley's Cabaret last April 28.

Established in September 1994, MIFICPA is composed of both accountancy and non-accountancy graduates for a minimal membership fee annually. The group, which became inactive from 2010 to 2011, now has over a hundred members.

Santos disclosed that he was actually elected VP internal and Robert Reyes as president. Santos explained, though, that Reyes is scheduled to leave Saipan for good this month. Since Santos is next in line, he was picked as Reyes' replacement to lead the group.

The new president said that MIFICPA has lined up several activities throughout the year, starting with a tax seminar last Feb. 25. Future events include a seminar on advanced Microsoft Excel within the month and, hopefully, will be in collaboration with the Philippine Overseas Labor Office; a booth at the *Pistang Pinoy* celebration in June; Building and Fixing Computer class in coordination with POLO in July; regular beach cleanups; and Accountants' Night and 18th anniversary celebration in Sept.

"While I'm new to the organization—having become a member only in 2009 right before it became inactive—I am deeply honored and grateful that the members gave me their vote of confidence and trust to lead them. I do take it as a challenge," Santos told *Saipan Tribune.*

Santos is employed with Marianas Pacific Distributors, Inc. for over three years. Prior to that, he worked for the now defunct Pacific Gardenia, Marianas Medical Center, and PHI Pharmacy. In the Philippines, he was part of the accounting team of Gotesco Properties, Inc.

Besides MIFICPA, Santos is also active with the Northern Marianas Badminton Association and serves as a commentator once a month during the 11am Tagalog Mass at Mount Carmel Cathedral.

Santos noted that MIFICPA's theme would help address the biggest challenge he will have to confront during his term, which is the economic downturn experience in the Commonwealth.

"With this kind of economy, we encourage our members to explore other opportunities in order to survive or to enhance their skills, allowing them to remain competitive in these changing times," he explained.

Santos knows the importance of professional development, which is why MIFICPA endeavors to provide its members with regular seminars. He encouraged accounting professionals that are non-members to sign up with MIFICPA. Membership forms may be downloaded from their Facebook account.

For more information, contact Noli Santos, (president) at 285-6810 (nolsantos@yahoo.com) or the following officers: Aileen Indino (287-0305, aileenrindino@yahoo.com); Butch Ordas (789-9276, butchordas@yahoo.com); or Robert Reyes (789-6498, robert2reyes@gmail.com).

ERRATUM

The Consulate corrects its earlier report that there were only 41 overseas absentee services in the Tinian Consular Services. There were 83 OAV services, bringing the total services during the April 21 and 22 services in Tinian to 336 services. Our apologies.

Experts see demise of the dollar as world currency

By DORIS C. DUMLAO, MICHELLE V. REMO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

It may only be a matter of time before the US dollar gets replaced as the main currency in international trade, according to economists attending the meeting of the board of governors of the Asian Development Bank.

For many years, the dollar "has been almost the sole 'reserve' currency," banked on by the world economy, American economist Jeffrey Sachs said Thursday in one of the forums held during the ADB annual event. "Going forward, [the dollar] can't play that role anymore."

Sachs added that he could not see how the US dollar could remain as the world's reserve currency when "the role of the United States in the global economy is diminishing."

Several finance experts echoed Sachs' sentiment, explaining that, with the greenback expected to weaken further, the world should turn to another currency to facilitate international trade and other commercial transactions.

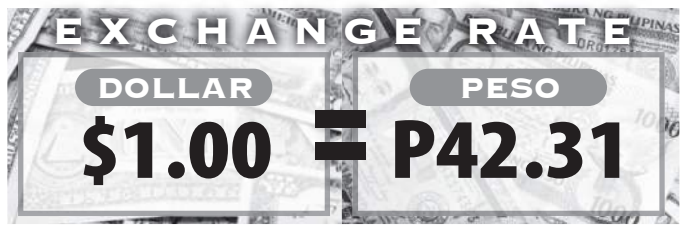
"Having another reserve currency other than the US dollar is only a matter of time. We don't know exactly when it will happen, but it will," Neeraj Swaroop of Standard Chartered Bank said in an interview at the sidelines of the ADB meeting.

In the area of merchandise trading, Swaroop said, countries have actually started to use currencies other than the US dollar.

Sachs also said that some countries could turn to more than one currency in maintaining their foreign exchange reserves.

One currency being considered is the Chinese renminbi (RMB) which, according to HSBC, will inevitably become an international reserve currency.

The renminbi, or the yuan, has the potential to become an international reserve currency because China is continuing to post strong growth, becoming an important player in the global economy, Iwan Azis, ADB head for regional integration, said in the same forum.



Also, China is pushing to make the yuan the world's reserve currency—a move that is seen to hasten the replacement of the US dollar, Azis added.

Already, British banking giant HSBC has mapped out a strategy to be a leading global player in the "renminbi banking" space.

This global strategy has filtered into the Philippine market with the bank's introduction of RMB-denominated deposit and trade financing facilities, top HSBC officials said in a press briefing Thursday.

Spencer Lake of HSBC said the renminbi was increasingly becoming an important currency from a trade perspective.

Lake is in town as head of the HSBC delegation to the ADB event.

"If it were freely convertible today, it will be the second-largest currency in the world," Lake said, noting that China has started to liberalize currency systems.

"It's part of our core strategy to adopt and put in place all of the infrastructure and products to embrace [the renminbi] as a future reserve currency," Lake said.

Lake said the bank's strategy appeared to be gaining ground as indicated by a "significant" buildup of the RMB business in Hong Kong, Singapore and other Southeast Asian countries.

"The world is getting ready to adopt it as a world currency," he said. "You'll see it as a more common language."

"Reserve" currency, which is currently used to describe the US dollar, is the denomination that accounts for bulk of the foreign exchange reserves of most countries. A country taps its foreign exchange reserves whenever it needs to pay off the costs of imported products and debts to foreign creditors.

After the United States fell into a recession in 2009, the US dollar began to weaken against emerging-market currencies.

The trouble with hanging on to the dollar as the main reserve currency is that it is prone to depreciation given the prevailing economic troubles of the United States. Depreciation of the US dollar, in turn, may lead to a reduction in the value of a country's foreign reserves, experts said.

Apart from the yuan, Sachs said other viable currencies that could replace the US dollar were the euro and the Japanese yen.

SWS: Poor families rise to 11.1M

An estimated 11.1 million Filipino households considered themselves poor in March, up from 9.1 million households in December, a recent survey by Social Weather Stations found.

The results of the survey, first published in BusinessWorld, found 55 percent of respondents rating their households poor, 10 points higher than the 45 percent three months earlier.

Those who said they were poor in terms of food accounted for 45 percent, which translates to approximately 9.1 million families, a rise of nine points from the 36 percent or 7.2 million families recorded in the previous quarter.

The figures are the highest so far under the Aquino administration.

SWS used face-to-face interviews for the noncommissioned survey, which had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points for national percentages and plus or minus 6 percentage points for area percentages.

The record for self-rated poverty was posted in July 1985 at 74 percent under the Marcos regime, while the record for self-rated food poverty was posted at 59 percent under the Ramos administration in April 1994 and in September 2002 under the Arroyo administration.

Reacting to the survey, Malacañang on Thursday said it was "natural" to see fluctuations in the levels of self-rated poverty because the government's antipoverty programs were taking time to be significantly felt.

Programs take time

Secretary Edwin Lacierda, President Benigno Aquino III's spokesperson, acknowledged that perceptions of poverty were among the indicators the administration was looking at.

"As we have said in the beginning, antipoverty programs take some time before the effects are felt on a sustained basis," Lacierda said in a news briefing.

"In the meantime, it is natural to see fluctuations in self-rated poverty," he said.

Lacierda, nonetheless, provided anecdotal evidence of the government's conditional cash transfer program benefiting target beneficiaries.

"We have heard for instance, when we were in Roxas City… one mother showed how her child was able to buy a new school bag, new shoes. She was also able to buy vitamins for her child," Lacierda said.

For the survey, SWS showed a card to 1,200 adults nationwide and asked them, "Where would you place your family on this card?" The choices included "not poor," "on the line" and "poor."

Self-rated poverty climbed sharply in Mindanao (72 percent in March from 38 percent in December). It also rose in the Visayas (61 percent from 52 percent previously).

The percentages for Metro Manila (46 percent from 47 percent) and the rest of Luzon (the same at 45 percent) remained basically unchanged.

Self-rated poverty also rose among those living in the rural areas (66 percent in March from 49 percent in December), but barely changed among those in the urban areas (40 percent from 41 percent).

Food poverty

For self-rated food poverty, SWS asked respondents "Based on the type of food eaten by your family, where would you place your family on this card?" Respondents were made to choose from "not poor," "on the line" and "poor."

Self-rated food poverty surged in Mindanao (64 percent in March from 30 percent in December). It also rose in the Visayas (47 percent from 43 percent) but barely changed in Metro Manila (30 percent from 31 percent) and the rest of Luzon (38 percent from 37 percent).

SWS also determined the self-rated poverty threshold of respondents who considered their households poor or food-poor by asking how much they needed monthly so as not to consider themselves poor.

The median poverty threshold rose in Metro Manila to P12,000 from P10,000, in Luzon outside Metro Manila to P10,000 from P6,000, in the Visayas to P8,000 from P6,000 and in Mindanao to P7,000 from P6,000.

The median food-poverty threshold in Metro Manila rose to P6,500 from P5,000. In Luzon outside Metro Manila, it rose to P5,000 from P4,000.

It went up to P4,500 from P3,750 in the Visayas and to P4,000 from P3,500 in Mindanao. ***(Philippine Daily Inquirer)***

AP

Philippine President Benigno Aquino III, foreground third right, smiles as he poses for a group photo session with foreign delegates during the opening ceremony of the four-day Asian Development Bank 45th Annual Board of Governors meeting in Pasay City, south of Manila, Friday, May 4, 2012.

Scarborough dispute may derail Asian economic plan

By MICHELLE V. REMO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

The conflict between China and the Philippines over the resource-rich Scarborough Shoal is likely to derail plans of selected Asian countries to integrate their economies by 2015, a chief economist and a social science expert from the two countries said.

Cayetano Paderanga Jr., economic planning secretary of the Philippines, said the geopolitical conflict could drive potential foreign investments away from the region.

"Yes, there may be an impact—on interest rates, on investments," Paderanga said on Wednesday evening at one of the forums of the weeklong convention of the Asian Development Bank at the Philippine International Convention Center.

On a similar note, Yu Yong Ding, a professor from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and one of China's delegates to the convention, said it was difficult to ensure stronger economic cooperation among Southeast and East Asian countries by 2015 if the Scarborough conflict would not be solved any time soon.

"My answer to that question is simple: 'Yes,'" Yu said when asked if he believed that the geopolitical conflict would affect plans of having an integrated economic community in the region three years from now.

Nonetheless, Paderanga and Yu were quick to add that Filipino and Chinese policymakers were expected to resolve the conflict sooner rather than later as they were aware of its adverse consequences.

"History shows that we [Asians] are capable of cooperation," Paderanga said. "There is no reason why we should stop now [from pursuing economic integration]," he said.

"Policymakers are wise enough to know that the matter must be resolved soon," Yu said.

Tension between China and the Philippines has escalated as vessels from the two countries refuse to leave Scarborough Shoal, a group of rock formations 220 kilometers west of Zambales province, which the Philippines calls Panatag Shoal or Bajo de Masinloc. The standoff continues as they trade accusations of aggression.

Although the tension is much more pronounced between China and the Philippines, other countries also claim islets and reefs in the South China Sea, which Manila calls the West Philippine Sea.

Zero tariffs on most goods

The proposed economic integration of selected Asian countries—namely, members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), Japan, China and South Korea—is intended to help promote economic development among member-countries.

Stronger economic cooperation among these countries is expected to make them less economically dependent on Western industrialized countries, which continue to struggle with serious sovereign debt and financial sector problems.

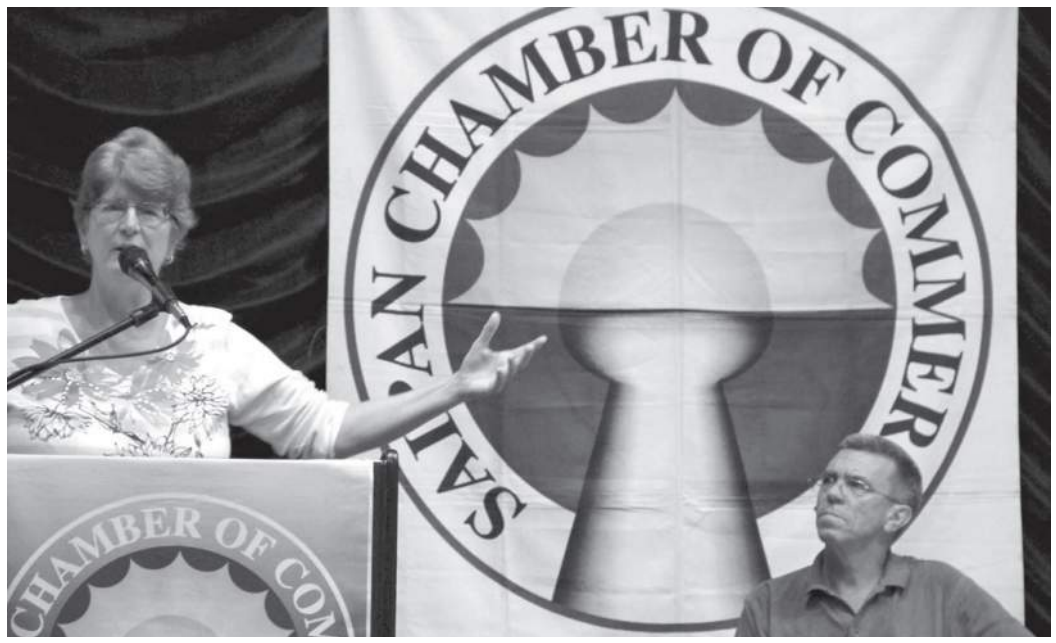
Under the proposed economic integration, tariffs on most goods traded among member-countries shall be brought down to zero or near zero, and rules and restrictions on portfolio and direct investments will be relaxed and lifted.

Samu't Sari

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

BUDGET HEARING

Acting Department of Public Safety Commissioner Ambrosio Ogumoro is joined by other DPS officials during a House Ways and Means Committee hearing on DPS's fiscal year 2013 budget on Capital Hill Wednesday afternoon.



HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

CHAMBER PRESENTATION

CNMI Water Task Force's Kay Delafield makes a short presentation to members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce during the organization's regular monthly meeting at the Hyatt Regency Saipan on May 2, 2012.

AG'S CUP WINNER

CLARISSA V. DAVID

Mount Carmel School junior student Victoria Camacho, second right, is flanked by family members and MCS president Margaret Dela Cruz after being hailed the first place winner of the 28th Annual Attorney General's Cup speech competition held at the Guma Hustisia last Thursday.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

Current and former attorneys general join 28th Annual AG's Cup champion Victoria Camacho for a souvenir photo after the speech competition on Thursday.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

BOARD MEETING

Marianas Visitors Authority board members and staff convene for its regular monthly meeting at their San Jose office on Saipan this week.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TOURISM MONTH

Hopwood Junior High School students pose with Jenn Castro, Hopwood MYWAVE Club adviser); Rep. Edmund Villagomez, chairman, House Committee on Commerce and Tourism; Mayor Donald Flores; Perry John Tenorio, managing director, Marianas Visitors Authority; Vicky Benavente, president, Marianas Tourism Educational Council; and others in front of the Governor's Office building following a signing ceremony on April 26 where acting governor Eloy Inos proclaimed May 2012 as CNMI Tourism Month. Selected Hopwood MYWAVE members read aloud the proclamation at the signing ceremony.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Advanced happy birthday to our beautiful aunt, Helen Al-Alou, who will be celebrating her special day on May 6, 2012! May your special day be filled with much love, with families and friends that love you and care so much about you. May the Lord bless you and guide you throughout your life. Your nieces and nephews thank you for being a wonderful aunty to us because without you we won't be smiling! We all love you aunty Helen! Greetings come from your nieces and nephews (The Basas).

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated birthday greetings to my cousin Soly Camacho, who celebrated her special day on May 3, 2012. Sis, I hope you enjoyed your day with your boo! May the Lord bless you and guide you each and every day of your life. Take care and enjoy every moment of your life! Love you, sis! Greetings come from Adnil B. Amazil.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DOUBLE CELEBRATION

Advance happy birthday to our mom, Josephine Sablan Indalecio, who will also be celebrating her wedding anniversary! Happy wedding anniversary Bill and Ofing. "En Guiya Hao, Tata Yan Nana," from your children Kim and Eric, Jun and Aggy, Walter and Rayvian, DJ and Jetro boy.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Business

US economy recovering but isn't yet accelerating

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. economy's recovery looks enduring. It's just not very strong.

Hiring, housing, consumer spending and manufacturing all appear to be improving, yet remain less than healthy. Economists surveyed by The Associated Press expect growth to pick up this year, though not enough to lower unemployment much.

A clearer picture of the nation's economic health will emerge Friday, when the government reveals how many jobs employers added in April.

"The outlook is for continued moderate growth," John Williams, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, said in a speech Thursday. "Nonetheless, we have nearly 4 1/2 million fewer jobs today than five years ago, and the unemployment rate remains very high at 8.2 percent."

The 32 economists polled by the AP late last month are confident the economy has entered a "virtuous cycle" in which more hiring boosts consumer spending, which leads to further hiring and spending. They expect unemployment to drop from 8.2 percent in March to below 8 percent by Election Day.

But they still think the rate won't reach a historically normal level below 6 percent until 2015 or later. And they predict hiring will slow the rest of this year from a relatively brisk December-February pace.

The government's economic data have been sending mixed signals about the health of the recovery from the Great Recession. Here's a look at the economy's vital signs:

JOBS

The job market is gradually improving, though not as fast as it had been. From December through February, employers added a strong 246,000 jobs a month. That figure sank to a weak 120,000 in March. The April jobs report could clarify whether March was a one-month dud—or evidence of a more lasting slowdown in job creation like the one that occurred in mid-2011.

The economists in the AP survey foresee average job growth of 177,000 a month from April through June and 189,000 for the next six months. The economy needs to generate about 125,000 jobs a month just to keep up with population growth.

On Thursday, the government said the number of people who applied for unemployment benefits last week fell by a sharper-than-expected 27,000 to a seasonally adjusted 365,000. That pointed to fewer layoffs and a brighter outlook for hiring.

Further cause for hope came in a government report Thursday on worker productivity: It fell from January through March by the most in a year. Declining productivity could be a positive sign for jobseekers. It may signal that companies are struggling to squeeze more from their workforces and must hire to keep up with customer orders.

HOUSING

The housing market has been a dead weight on the economy. The single-family home market, in particular, is still struggling. House prices dropped for six straight months through February, according to the Standard & Poor's/Case-Shiller home-price index. And Americans bought fewer previously owned homes in March.

The economists polled by the AP worry that the lingering effects of the housing bust are slowing the economy's expansion. They say growth can't accelerate until national home prices finally hit bottom.

Still, spending on home construction and renovations rose from January through March by the most in nearly two years. And housing investment, led by apartment construction, is expected to contribute to economic growth this year for the first time since 2005.

The warm winter may also have led more people to buy earlier in the year, essentially stealing sales from March. Reduced prices, record-low mortgage rates, higher rents and the improving job market appear to be emboldening would-be buyers. Many seem to have concluded that prices won't drop much further, if at all.

And builders are laying plans to construct more homes in 2012 than at any other point in the past 3 1/2 years.

CONSUMERS

Americans have proved surprisingly willing to spend in the face of a wobbly economy. In the first three months of the year, consumer spending grew at an annual pace of 2.9 percent, the fastest in more than a year.

Some economists doubt that consumers can keep it up. They probably can't afford to. Americans' after-tax income in the first three months rose just 0.6 percent from a year earlier. That was the skimpiest pay increase in two years. People spent more, in part, because they saved less. Economists worry that people won't keep spending more unless their income grows.

On Thursday, big retailers including Costco, Macy's and Target, reported that sales last month came in below expectations.

CORPORATE PROFITS

U.S. companies earned more money than analysts expected from January through March. They're beating Wall Street estimates at the best rate in more than a decade. Improved earnings have propelled the Dow Jones industrial average up nearly 4 percent since April 10.

U.S. corporations excluding banks and other financial firms are sitting on more than $2.2 trillion in cash, up from $1.7 trillion in 2009. That surplus means they can afford to expand and hire whenever they're confident enough.

MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing has provided much of the fuel for the U.S. recovery since the recession ended roughly three years ago. American manufacturing expanded last month at the fastest pace in 10 months. New orders rose to the highest level in a year, a signal of more production in coming months. Export orders also rose, despite worries that weaker economies in Europe and China could hold back U.S. exports.

And the busier factories are hiring. Manufacturers added 120,000 jobs a month through March this year, their fastest three-month pace since 1997.

But the economists surveyed by the AP think manufacturers will fill jobs more slowly the rest of the year. If so, that could weaken overall job growth.

Samsung reveals new flagship Galaxy smartphone

NEW YORK (AP)—Samsung Electronics Co.'s latest Galaxy phone will have a high-definition touch screen that's nearly twice the size of the iPhone, while being thinner and lighter than Apple's phone.

The Galaxy line has emerged as the biggest competitor to the iPhone. Samsung said the Galaxy S III will go on sale in Europe on May 29 and in the U.S. this summer. The Korean company showed off the phone Thursday at an event in London.

Like previous Galaxy phones, the S III will run Google Inc.'s Android software. The processor, or "brains" of the device, will be upgraded to include four computing cores. The iPhone and most other high-end phones are "dual-core," but there are some quad-core devices on sale already.

The added computing power will be put to use in the S III's expanded voice-command features. When the phone screen is off, owners will be able to "wake" it up by saying "Hi, Galaxy." They can then give further spoken commands. When Apple launched the iPhone 4S last year, it also made advances in voice recognition a central selling point.

Samsung will sell a pad that charges a phone placed on it, with no need to connect a cable. Palm Inc.'s last smartphone had a similar feature when released three years ago, but it never became popular.

Samsung said the phone will go on sale in 145 countries with 296 phone companies, making it the company's biggest launch so far.

AP

This product image provided by Samsung shows the latest phone in the company's Galaxy line.

In the U.S., Japan and Korea, the phone will use fourth-generation, or 4G, networks for faster data downloads. Samsung didn't say which carriers would sell it, but the previous Galaxy model was sold by all four national U.S. wireless carriers: Verizon, AT&T, Sprint and T-Mobile.

Samsung doesn't release phone shipment figures, but most analysts believe its smartphones outsold Apple and its 35.1 million iPhones in the January-to-March period. Canaccord Genuity analyst Michael Walkley believes Apple and Samsung together accounted for virtually all the profits in the phone industry in the first three months of 2012, with three-quarters going to Apple by virtue of its singular focus on the high-priced iPhone.

Samsung and Apple have a complicated relationship. They're rivals in the smartphone and tablet-computer markets and fight each other in court over patents. But Samsung is one of Apple's largest suppliers of chips and displays, and Apple is one of Samsung's largest clients.

The Galaxy series debuted in 2010. The screen size has increased with each version: The Galaxy S had a screen that measured 4 inches diagonally. It was followed by the S II, at 4.3 inches.

The S III screen has a 4.8-inch screen. Meanwhile, the iPhone screen has stayed the same size, at 3.5 inches, but the recent models pack more pixels into the screen, for a sharper display.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

April retail sales worst since 2009

NEW YORK (AP)—Americans' spending—much like the economy—continues to yo-yo. Major retailers such as Costco and Macy's reported on Thursday that April revenue rose less that 1 percent in the worst performance since 2009 when the U.S. economy was just coming out of a bad recession. The disappointing results follow two consecutive months of strong sales that were boosted by positive economic news about the job and housing markets. A small group of merchants representing roughly 13 percent of the $2.4 trillion U.S. retail industry report monthly revenue at stores open at least a year, a key measure since it excludes results from locations that open and close during the year.

Facebook valued at up to $95B in IPO price range

NEW YORK (AP)—Facebook, the company that turned the social Web into a cultural and business phenomenon, is worth as much as $95 billion, according to the price range for its upcoming initial public offering of stock. Facebook's IPO, expected in a couple of weeks, would be the biggest ever for an Internet company. Facebook disclosed the price range of $28 to $35 per share in a regulatory filing Thursday. At the high end, Facebook and its current shareholders could raise as much as $13.58 billion—far more than the $1.9 billion raised in the 2004 offering for current Internet IPO record-holder Google Inc. The IPO valued the company at $23 billion. Google is now worth about $200 billion.

Pepsi brings back Michael Jackson in promotion

NEW YORK (AP)—PepsiCo Inc. is going on a reunion tour with The King of Pop.

The Purchase, N.Y.-based company on Thursday announced its deal with the estate of Michael Jackson to use the late pop star's image for its new global marketing push. The nature of the promotion will vary by country, but will include special edition cans bearing Jackson's image, a TV ad in some markets and chances to download remixes of some of Jackson's most famous songs.

Pepsi, which first partnered with Jackson in 1983, did not disclose the terms of its deal with the singer's estate.

The promotion is part of a global marketing blitz planned for the year ahead by Pepsi, which is looking to revive its brand and win back market share from The Coca-Cola Co. Next week, Pepsi is also launching a TV ad featuring singer Nicki Minaj and announcing details of its partnership with Twitter to stream concerts online.

AP

This image provided by PepsiCo Inc. shows Pepsi's "King of Pop" can featuring a likeness of Michael Jackson.

The broader "Live For Now" campaign is intended to amplify the company's longstanding ties with pop culture, said Brad Jakeman, who oversees the creative strategy for Pepsi's carbonated drinks around the world.

Pepsi has a lot riding on its new push. Although the company has a diverse portfolio of brands including Frito-Lay, Quaker Oats and Tropicana, it's often judged by the performance of its namesake cola. And in 2010, Pepsi was knocked out of the No. 2 spot among sodas in the U.S. by Diet Coke, with Coke remaining in the No. 1 position, according to the industry tracker Beverage Digest.

Last month, Pepsi also reported that volume in its key Americas beverages unit slipped by 1 percent in the first three months of the year.

Nation

US uses bin Laden letters to degrade al-Qaida

WASHINGTON (AP)—Letters from Osama bin Laden's last hideaway, released by U.S. officials intent on discrediting his terror organization, portray a network weak, inept and under siege—and its leader seemingly near wit's end about the passing of his global jihad's glory days.

The documents, published online Thursday, are a small sample of those seized during the U.S. raid on bin Laden's Pakistan compound in which he was killed a year ago. By no accident, they show al-Qaida at its worst. The raid has become the signature national security moment of Barack Obama's presidency and one he is eager to emphasize in his re-election campaign.

Those ends are served in the 17 documents chosen by U.S. officials for the world to see—not to mention American voters. The Obama administration has refused to release a fuller record of its bin Laden collection, making it difficult to glean any larger truths about the state of the terrorist organization.

What is clear from the documents released so far is that al-Qaida's leaders are constantly on the run from unmanned U.S. aircraft and trying to evade detection by CIA spies and National Security Agency eavesdroppers.

In one letter, either bin Laden himself or his senior deputy tells the leader of Yemen's al-Qaida offshoot that, in the face of U.S. power, it is futile to try to establish a government that will offer it safe haven.

bin Laden

"Even though we were able to militarily and economically exhaust and weaken our greatest enemy before and after the eleventh," the letter says, referring to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, "the enemy continues to possess the ability to topple any state we establish."

Again and again in the letters, bin Laden and his inner circle struggle to keep the focus of Islamic terrorism on killing Americans and tamp down attacks by al-Qaida affiliates on Muslim innocents. The documents describe the U.S. as "a malicious tree with a huge trunk," and its allies as mere branches not worth al-Qaida's time.

From his redoubt in Pakistan, bin Laden was keenly aware that his organization's standing with Muslim populations was crumbling.

"I plan to release a statement that we are starting a new phase to correct (the mistakes) we made," bin Laden wrote in 2010. "In doing so, we shall reclaim, God willing, the trust of a large segment of those who lost their trust in the jihadis."

Such passages offer a glimpse into the terrorist's mindset. They also fit into the U.S. government's public relations fight with al-Qaida. The U.S. has repeatedly sought to diminish the group's standing in the Muslim world.

The documents, which date from September 2006 to April 2011, were declassified by U.S. intelligence officials and posted by scholars at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. As part of the declassification process, intelligence officials would have withheld any documents that they felt could inflame anti-American sentiment—another reason the documents offer a largely sanitized version.

Researchers say they have new clue to Lost Colony

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (AP)—A new look at a 425-year-old map has yielded a tantalizing clue about the fate of the Lost Colony, the settlers who disappeared from North Carolina's Roanoke Island in the late 16th century.

Experts from the First Colony Foundation and the British Museum in London discussed their findings Thursday at a scholarly meeting on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Their focus: the "Virginea Pars" map of Virginia and North Carolina created by explorer John White in the 1580s and owned by the British Museum since 1866.

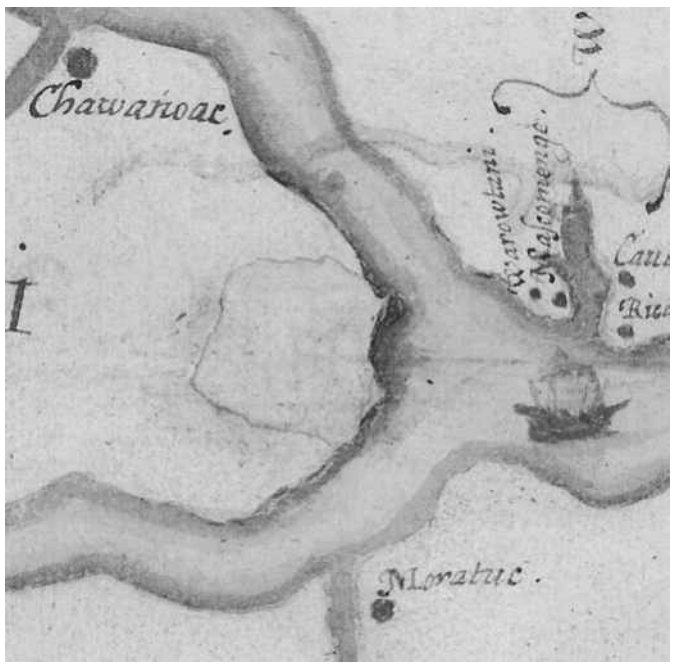
"We believe that this evidence provides conclusive proof that they moved westward up the Albemarle Sound to the confluence of the Chowan and Roanoke rivers," said James Horn, vice president of research and historical interpretation at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and author of a 2010 book about the Lost Colony.

"Their intention was to create a settlement. And this is what we believe we are looking at with this symbol—their clear intention, marked on the map ..."

Attached to the map are two patches. One patch appears to merely correct a mistake on the map, but the other—in what is modern-day Bertie County in northeastern North Carolina—hides what appears to be a fort. Another symbol, appearing to be the very faint image of a different kind of fort, is drawn on top of the patch.

The American and British scholars believe the fort symbol could indicate where the settlers went. The British researchers joined the Thursday meeting via webcast.

In a joint announcement, the museums said, "First Colony Foundation researchers believe that it could mark, literally and symbolically, `the way to Jamestown.' As such, it is a unique discovery of the first importance."



AP

This image made available by the British Museum shows a map named "La Virginea Pars" painted by explorer John White between 1585-1586. The detail shows a patch stuck to the map which could be a clue to understand what happened to the Roanoke settlement which disappeared after White sailed back to England.

White made the map and other drawings when he traveled to Roanoke Island in 1585 on an expedition commanded by Sir Ralph Lane. In 1587, a second colony of 116 English settlers landed on Roanoke Island, led by White. He left the island for England for more supplies but couldn't return again until 1590 because of the war between England and Spain.

When he came back, the colony was gone. White knew the majority had planned to move "50 miles into the maine," as he wrote, referring to the mainland. The only clue he found about the fate of the other two dozen was the word "CROATOAN" carved into a post, leading historians to believe they moved south to live with American Indians on what's now Hatteras Island.

But the discovery of the fort symbol offers the first new clue in centuries about what happened to the 95 or so settlers, experts said Thursday. And researchers at the British Museum discovered it because Brent Lane, a member of the board of the First Colony Foundation, asked a seemingly obvious question: What's under those two patches?

Researchers say the patches attached to White's excruciatingly accurate map were made with ink and paper contemporaneous with the rest of the map. One corrected mistakes on the shoreline of the Pamlico River and the placing of some villages. But the other covered the possible fort symbol, which is visible only when the map is viewed in a light box.

The map was critical to Sir Walter Raleigh's quest to attract investors in his second colony, Lane said. It was critical to his convincing Queen Elizabeth I to let him keep his charter to establish a colony in the New World. It was critical to the colonists who navigated small boats in rough waters.

Virginia profile rises in presidential contest

PORTSMOUTH, Va. (AP)—Move over Ohio and Florida. Virginia is becoming the hottest new battleground in this year's race for the White House.

Shifting demographics have President Barack Obama fighting for another win in this Southern state four years after he became the first Democratic presidential nominee to carry Virginia in more than four decades. Republican rival Mitt Romney is banking on buyers' remorse as he works to prove that Obama's unlikely 2008 victory was a fluke.

Obama

Six months before Election Day, both sides concede that Virginia is truly up for grabs. And the outcome here could have dramatic consequences—for Romney especially.

"This may well be the state that decides who the next president is," Romney told supporters Thursday in coastal Portsmouth, Va. "You're going to hear it all, right here in Virginia."

Already, Romney allies and Obama's campaign are pouring money into television ads. And, by week's end, each candidate will have visited the state.

Romney spent two days campaigning here this week, his first Virginia trip since becoming his party's presumptive presidential nominee. Obama will be in the state on Friday and Saturday -what his aides are calling his first formal day of campaigning—before traveling to Ohio.

Four years ago, Obama executed a winning strategy by registering and turning out scores of minorities and young voters who long had sat on the political sidelines.

This year, Virginia—perhaps more so than any other state—will test whether he can cobble together a similar winning coalition amidst shifting demographics and despite a challenging economic environment.

Virginia has swung dramatically right in the years since the Democratic president took office—so much so, that Romney aides suggest that the state has become a linchpin in their national path to victory.

"It's an important key in the overall map," Romney's political director, Rich Beeson, said.

Republican insiders go further, saying that it's hard to see Romney reaching the 270 electoral votes needed without the 13 that Virginia provides.

Indeed, an Obama win here could prove devastating for Romney, whose team understands the challenge of unseating a sitting president who has tremendous financial and organizational advantages. Already, Obama has established a comprehensive ground game in Virginia, with more than 13 offices spread across the state. Romney, who spent most of the year consumed by a bitter and expensive Republican primary, has yet to open one.

Beeson said Thursday that the Romney campaign would be "up and running" in Virginia in the "next week or two."

The Obama campaign argues that the stakes are higher here for Romney.

ACROSS THE NATION

Wife of former Minn. Viking guilty in hit-and-run

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—The wife of former Minnesota Viking Joe Senser was convicted Thursday of two felonies in a hit-and-run accident that killed a man, with jurors brushing aside her defense that she never saw him and thought she had hit a construction barrel or pothole. Amy Senser was convicted of leaving the scene of an accident and failure to promptly report an accident, both criminal vehicular homicide charges, in the August death of Anousone Phanthavong. She was acquitted of a third felony charge of gross negligence. She was also convicted of misdemeanor careless driving.

3 agents shot, injured in SF Bay area incident

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (AP)—Three Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents were shot and injured Thursday while serving "high-risk" warrants during an early morning sweep of San Francisco Bay area gang members, authorities said. The agents suffered non-life-threatening injuries after being shot with an assault rifle and were hospitalized in stable condition following the incident in Petaluma that was in connection with the investigation of a 2010 gang-related triple homicide in South San Francisco.

Colo. civil unions bill passes biggest test yet

DENVER (AP)—Gay couples campaigning for civil unions in Colorado have claimed their biggest victory yet as a key Republican-led House committee advanced a bill Thursday that it had previously opposed. The newfound support means Colorado is likely to become the latest of more than a dozen states to provide legal protections to gay couples similar to marriage. Rep. Mark Ferrandino, the Democrats' leader in the House and a gay lawmaker who sponsored the bill, said before the vote that he and other people just want equal rights. He noted the law books behind the Republican committee chairman overseeing the House Judiciary Committee's hearing.

Military commanders warned to get troops in line

WASHINGTON (AP)—Military leaders are telling commanders to get their troops in line and refrain from misconduct such as urinating on enemy corpses, in a sharp response to the tasteless photos and other disturbing examples of bad behavior that have enraged Afghans and complicated warfighting. The broader message to shore up discipline in the ranks was expected to be underscored by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta in remarks Friday at Fort Benning, Ga.

Asia

Chinese activist calls his situation 'dangerous'

By GILLIAN WONG
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING (AP)—A blind Chinese activist at the center of a diplomatic standoff between the United States and China said Friday his situation is "dangerous," and that American officials have been blocked from seeing him for two days and friends who have tried to visit have been beaten up.

Chen Guangcheng sounded anxious as he spoke to The Associated Press by telephone from his hospital bed Friday, saying he was very worried about his safety. He is now seeking U.S. help to leave the country after he fled house arrest and sought refuge at the U.S. Embassy.

"I can only tell you one thing. My situation right now is very dangerous," Chen said. "For two days, American officials who have wanted to come and see me have not been allowed in."

Chen said he spoke to American officials by phone on Friday, twice, "but the calls keep getting cut off after two sentences."

Chen also said friends who have tried to visit him have been beaten up. Chen did not provide examples, but Jiang Tianyong, an activist lawyer and friend of Chen's, was taken away and beaten by state security agents when he tried to visit Chen at the hospital, Jiang's wife said Friday. She said Jiang was beaten so badly he suffered hearing loss in one ear.

Security agents are also restricting the movements of Chen's wife, he said, adding that Yuan had to seek permission to go out and when she was allowed to leave, she was followed by guards who recorded her outing on video cameras.

AP

In this photo released by the US Embassy Beijing Press Office, blind lawyer Chen Guangcheng, in wheel chair, meets his wife Yuan Weijing, right, daughter Chen Kesi, in blue shirt at second right, and son Chen Kerui, left, at a hospital in Beijing, Wednesday, May 2, 2012.

Calls to the news office of the Beijing public security bureau rang unanswered and officials did not immediately respond to a faxed request for comment. A woman who answered the phone at the main office of Chaoyang Hospital, where Chen is being treated, refused to comment, saying she did not know about Chen's situation.

Chen last week escaped his rural home where local officials had kept him under house arrest for years. He made it to the U.S. Embassy, where he stayed for six days before the U.S. and China reached a deal that would allow him to stay in China but in a new location, as he had requested. But hours after leaving the embassy Wednesday he said he and his family would not be safe unless they left the country.

A self-taught lawyer, the 40-year-old Chen became an international human rights figure and inspiration to many ordinary Chinese after running afoul of local government officials for exposing forced abortions and sterilizations carried out as part of China's one-child policy. Until his escape last week, his nearly seven years in prison and abusive house arrest with his wife, 6-year-old daughter and mother fueled outrage and added to his stature—and in turn upped the stakes for Washington in helping him.

Chen said throughout his stay at the U.S. Embassy that his desire was to remain in China with his family, and U.S. diplomats said that was their goal in negotiations with Chinese officials.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Bombs kill 5 people in northwest Pakistan

KHAR, Pakistan (AP)—A Pakistani official says two bomb blasts targeting anti-Taliban tribal elders and security forces have killed five people in the country's northwest. Tariq Khan says the attacks occurred Thursday in Chamarkand town in the Bajur tribal region. Khan is a senior official in the area. Khan said that in the first attack, a bomb planted alongside a road exploded as two anti-Taliban tribal elders were walking past, killing them both. Khan said a second blast occurred when security forces rushed to the scene, killing two paramilitary soldiers and one police official. Both bombs appeared to be detonated by remote control. No group has claimed responsibility.

Taiwan presidential guard shoots himself on duty

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Officials say a soldier has fatally shot himself while standing guard at the front gate of Taiwan's presidential office building in downtown Taipei. The Defense Ministry said the 22-year-old soldier, surnamed Kao, shot himself in the chest before dawn Thursday. It said fellow guards witnessed the incident but were not able to intervene. Officials said President Ma Ying-jeou was not at the office building at the time of the incident. Local media said the military was seeking to close any security loopholes. The Defense Ministry said that Kao was known to have broken up with his girlfriend recently and that his supervisors had tried to ease his distress.

Afghanistan: Pakistani driving truck bomb arrested

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Afghanistan's intelligence agency prevented a large terrorist attack, arresting a Pakistani citizen driving a truck packed with explosives, according to a statement Thursday. The agency said in the statement that the man was arrested on a main road in Kabul's east. It said the man was going to use the truck bomb in a suicide attack, but it was unclear if the attack was imminent. The agency did not say what the suspected target was. It pledged to release more details as they became available. The arrest came a day after a suicide attack on the same road killed seven people.

Philippines erects wall to obscure view of slums

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Delegates attending an international conference in the Philippines capital may not see what they came to discuss: abject poverty. A makeshift, temporary wall has been erected across a bridge on a road from the airport to downtown Manila that hides a sprawling slum along a garbage-strewn creek. Presidential spokesman Ricky Carandang defended the wall's installation, saying Thursday "any country will do a little fixing up before a guest comes." He expressed hope that this week's annual meeting of Asian Development Bank Board of Governors, which includes finance ministers and senior officials from 67 member states, will show the Philippines is open for business.

Bomb targeting security forces kill 16 in Pakistan

KHAR, Pakistan (AP)—A bombing in a Pakistani market close to the Afghan border killed 16 people Friday, a day after the U.S. released a letter written by Osama bin Laden that criticized similar attacks for killing too many civilians.

Five of the dead in the Bajur region blast were local security force members, including one who had received an award for bravery in fighting Islamist militants, government administrator Abdul Haseeb said. The others were passers-by. At least 40 people were wounded.

The Pakistani Taliban or allied groups will be suspected in the attack.

The group, which is battling for control of the region, has killed and wounded thousands of people since 2009, many of them civilians in markets or mosques.

On Thursday, the U.S. released 17 letters seized from the compound of al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden by American commandos after they had killed him one year ago. In one of them, bin Laden complains about the actions of the Pakistani Taliban, which he says was mistaken to plant bombs in markets and mosques that kill civilians.

Family concerns key to Chinese activist's choices

BEIJING (AP)—Chen Guangcheng's sudden change of heart to leave China after insisting for days he wanted to stay has caught his American supporters off guard. But his reason was simple: His family's safety came first.

Reliant on relatives to be his eyes on the world, Chen and his family share a bond strengthened by years of enforced isolation and a shared fight against vengeful local officials. His son was taken from him two years ago. His daughter has been harassed, his wife beaten, his mother followed by guards as she tilled their fields.

Though the blind activist initially agreed to let China relocate him and his family to the northeastern coastal city of Tianjin, he now says that won't be far enough away from their persecutors in eastern Shandong province to guarantee their safety.

Chen is begging the U.S. to help him go abroad with his wife and two children. He would like his widowed mother to join them.

It's a stunning reversal from a hard-won compromise between China and the United States that saw Chen leave the U.S. Embassy in Beijing where he had taken shelter after a daring nighttime escape from 20 months of abusive house arrest in his rural town.

Just a day ago, Chen's mind seemed made up to remain in China after he was allowed a pair of phone calls with his wife, who had been brought with their children to Beijing via bullet train, U.S. Ambassador Gary Locke said Thursday.

"He spoke with his wife on the phone twice and then we asked him what did he want to do," Locke said. "He jumped up very excited and said, 'Let's go.'"

The alternative, Locke said, was a protracted negotiation, with Chen stuck in the embassy and his family at home and at risk.

"He knew that—and was very aware that he might have to spend many, many years in the embassy," Locke said.

On the way to the hospital, Chen was "emotional, happy about the fact that he was going to be reunited with his family," a U.S. official said Wednesday, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Photos of the reunion released Thursday by the U.S. show Chen in a wheelchair in a bright hospital hallway smiling warmly as he greeted his wife and two children. His 6-year-old daughter, Kesi, wore pigtails and his son of about 10, Kerui, was dressed in a T-shirt and sweat pants. In a second shot, Kerui rested a tentative hand on his father's wheelchair.

The moment marked the first time in two years that the boy had seen his father, diplomats said.

The separation was never by choice.

"They broke up and hurt Chen Guangcheng's family," Chen's lawyer, Li Jinsong, said Thursday. "It was the local government officials who wouldn't let the son go home because he was getting older and was better able to understand things, and what the local officials most feared was that Chen Guangcheng and his family would be able to communicate with the outside world. So, he was left with his maternal grandmother."

A self-taught lawyer, the 40-year-old Chen is best known—and earned the most enmity from local authorities—for his activism exposing abuses in his community related to China's one-child policy, including forced abortions and sterilizations, in a scandal that prompted the central government to punish some local officials.

Chen and his wife, Yuan Weijing, were allowed two children under an exception for disabled people, his supporters say, although Shandong's published guidelines say only a disabled person whose first child is a girl is eligible for a second one. It's not clear if Chen was ever reprimanded or fined for his second child.

Wednesday's reunion was initially painted as a triumph for U.S. diplomacy, but Chen now says his exit from the embassy was a rushed and bittersweet compromise. He said the Chinese government was threatening to send his family back to their rural home, and that U.S. officials pressured him to leave.

"I decided to leave" the embassy, Chen told The Associated Press late Wednesday. "But I felt very frustrated, especially over the threats to my family. They said if I didn't leave, they would take my children and family back to Shandong."

Chen served four years in prison after a 2006 conviction on what his supporters say were charges fabricated by officials in Dongshigu, Chen's home village in Shandong.

World

White House: Time to try another tactic in Syria

WASHINGTON (AP)—It may be time for the world to acknowledge that a cease-fire is not holding in Syria, and that it is time to try another approach to stop the violence, the White House said Thursday.

"If the regime's intransigence continues, the international community is going to have to admit defeat," White House press secretary Jay Carney said.

It was the clearest statement yet that the Obama administration sees little chance for the cease-fire and peace plan brokered by United Nations envoy Kofi Annan last month but largely ignored by Syrian forces loyal to President Bashar Assad.

"It is clear and we will not deny that the plan has not been succeeding thus far," Carney said.

The Annan plan has done little to stem the bloodshed, but so far other nations that back it have been unwilling to say it is dead.

U.S. officials have said the plain is failing because of Syrian government violations.

The Assad government and the Syrian opposition are blaming one another for torpedoing the truce, with Assad's forces trying to repress demonstrators calling for him to step down. The regime also is facing an armed rebellion that has sprung up as peaceful protests have proved ineffective against his forces.

The United States was skeptical of the Annan program from the start, fearing that it lacked teeth and might lead to an easing of international pressure on Syria. The U.S. has publicly backed the plan, however, and Carney did so again Thursday.

Carney

The spokesman said that if the Syrian regime keeps flouting the cease-fire, the United States and other nations should try other measures to pressure Assad. Carney said that would include a return to the U.N. Security Council, which approved an observer mission in Syria last month, and other attempts to marshal international pressure. He did not say what that entails.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is on record supporting a U.N. arms embargo and a ban on overseas travel by senior members of the Syrian regime. Those or other harsh measures are almost certain to face a veto from Russia, Syria's principal ally at the Security Council, at least until the three-month observer mission ends.

The U.S. is not considering a military intervention in Syria now.

Annan, the joint U.N.-Arab League envoy, is scheduled to brief the Security Council on Tuesday with the latest assessment on implementation of his six-point peace plan.

Syrian forces stormed student dormitories during an anti-government protest at Aleppo University on Thursday, firing tear gas and bullets in an hours-long siege that killed at least four students and forced the closure of the state-run school, activists said.

U.N. truce observers toured other restive parts of the country, and residents told them of being too terrified to walk on the streets after dark as the 14-month uprising rages on. The U.N. estimates 9,000 people have been killed since the revolt began.

The head of the U.N. observers, Norwegian Maj. Gen. Robert Mood, visited the central cities of Homs and Hama, where anti-regime sentiment runs high. He said there is still "a good chance and an opportunity" to break the cycle of violence.

"I call on all the parties to stop the violence," Mood told reporters. "If you use military force, it creates more force, it creates more violence ... so it should always be the last resort."

3 journalists slain in Mexico's Veracruz state

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Three photojournalists who covered the perilous crime beat in the violence-torn eastern Mexico state of Veracruz were found slain and dumped in plastic bags in a canal on Thursday, less than a week after a reporter for an investigative newsmagazine was beaten and strangled in her home in the same state, officials, colleagues and said.

Press freedom groups said all three photographers had temporarily fled the state after receiving threats last year. The organizations called for immediate government action to halt a wave of attacks that has killed at least seven current and former reporters and photographers in Veracruz over the last 18 months.

Like most of the slain, the men found Thursday had been among the few journalists left working on crime-related stories in the state. Threats and killings have spawned an atmosphere of terror and self-censorship among the journalists of Veracruz, with most local media outlets too intimidated to report on drug-related violence, and social media and blogs the only outlets reporting on serious crime.

Mexico has become one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists in recent years, disproportionately targeted as a militarized government offensive against drug cartels and rivalry between criminal groups fuel tens of thousands of killings, kidnappings and extortion.

Prosecutions in journalist killings are all but unknown, as is the case with almost all homicides and other serious crimes in Mexico.

The latest killings came in Boca del Rio, a town near the port city of Veracruz where police found the bodies of four people Thursday after passers-by spotted four suspicious black plastic bags in a wastewater canal, the Veracruz state Attorney General's Office said. The bodies, pulled from the canal by police boats, bore signs of torture and had been dismembered, the prosecutor's office said.

One victim was identified as Guillermo Luna Varela, a crime-news photographer for the website www.veracruznews.com.mx who was last seen by local reporters covering a car accident Wednesday afternoon. According to a fellow journalist, who insisted on speaking anonymously out of fear, Luna was in his 20s and had begun his career working for the local newspaper Notiver.

The journalist said Luna was the nephew of victim Gabriel Huge, who was in his early 30s and worked as a photojournalist for Notiver until last summer, when he fled the state soon after two of the paper's reporters were slain in still-unsolved killings.

Huge had returned to the state to work as a reporter, but it was not immediately clear what kind of stories he had been covering most recently.

State officials said the third victim was Esteban Rodriguez, who was a photographer for the local newspaper AZ until last summer, when he too quit and fled the state. He later returned, but took up work as a welder. The London-based press freedom group Article 19 said he, like the other two, had been a crime photographer.

AP

Police remove from a canal plastic bags containing the dismembered bodies of four people in Boca del Rio, Mexico, Thursday.

Journalists being killed at 'astonishing pace'

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—On World Press Freedom Day, Reporters Without Borders condemned the "astonishing pace" at which journalists are being attacked and murdered—67 killed in 2011 and 22 more deaths since the beginning of the year.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called the attacks "outrageous" and urged all countries to prevent and prosecute violence against the media and take action to ensure the safety of journalists and freedom of the press.

At Thursday's U.N. commemoration of Press Freedom Day, Ban asked the assembled diplomats, members of the media and civil society representatives to observe a minute of silence "in honor of the journalists who were killed in the line of duty last year."

According to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, 179 journalists were detained in 2011, a 20-percent increase over 2010 and the highest level since 1990, Ban said.

"Countless others face intimidation, harassment and censorship at the hands of governments, corporations and powerful individuals seeking to preserve their power or hide wrongdoings and misdeeds," the secretary-general said.

Ireland's President Michael Higgins, a former broadcaster, told the commemoration the deaths demonstrate the risks that journalists and media workers face and "their vulnerability to intimidation, violence and persecution."

"Many were victims of targeted killings, while the circumstances of other killings may never be fully explained," he said.

Reporters Without Borders updated its list of "predators of the freedom to inform" to 41 individuals and group. It said the first quarter of 2012 clearly showed that the world's predators led by Syria's President Bashar Assad and Somalia's Islamist militias "are capable of behaving like outrageous butchers."

The media advocacy organization, based in France, decried the increase in attacks and killings of news providers—up from 57 murders in 2010 to 67 in 2011, and 22 so far this year including five journalists killings in Somalia, four in Syria, and two each in Bangladesh, Brazil and India.

Russian military ups the ante on missile defense

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia's top military officer has threatened to carry out a pre-emptive strike on U.S.-led NATO missile defense facilities in Eastern Europe if Washington goes ahead with its controversial plan to build a missile shield.

President Dmitry Medvedev said last year that Russia will retaliate militarily if it does not reach an agreement with the United States and NATO on the missile defense system.

Chief of General Staff Nikolai Makarov went even further Thursday. "A decision to use destructive force pre-emptively will be taken if the situation worsens," he said at an international conference attended by senior U.S. and NATO officials.

Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov also warned on Thursday that talks between Moscow and Washington on the topic are "close to a dead end."

U.S. missile defense plans in Europe have been one of the touchiest subjects in U.S.-Russian relations for years.

Moscow rejects Washington's claim that the missile defense plan is solely to deal with any Iranian missile threat and has voiced fears it will eventually become powerful enough to undermine Russia's nuclear deterrent. Moscow has proposed running the missile shield jointly with NATO, but the alliance has rejected that proposal.

Makarov's statement on Thursday doesn't seem to imply an immediate threat, but aims to put extra pressure on Washington to agree to Russia's demands.

The two-day conference in Moscow is the last major Russia-U.S. meeting about military issues before a NATO summit in Chicago later this month. Russia has not yet said whether it will send top officials.

In a candid, lively exchange during a conference side session, officials talked about the high level of distrust remaining between the two sides.

Young Style

Superheroes will fly off the shelves on Free Comic Book Day

By BRIAN TRUITT
USA TODAY

The Avengers blast onto movie screens this week, but heroes of all sorts await readers today on Free Comic Book Day.

Local comics shops all over the world will give away more than 3.5 million comics to customers, including a special Avengers introductory issue a day after the movie opens. (A list of participating retailers can be found at FreeComicBookDay.com.)

Superheroes are a part of every Free Comic Book Day, held the first Saturday of every May to hook new readers into their local comics stores and hopefully make them regular customers. But there also are several books of various genres that will appeal to children and adults.

Want to try some comics but don't know which to choose? Here is a guide to some of the free comics that will appeal to particular pop-culture tastes.

If you enjoy…

CLASSIC DISNEY CARTOON MOVIES

Try: Archaia Entertainment's hardcover sampler, featuring stories of the brave and well-armed rodents of Mouse Guard, the rural fantasy of Rust, the upcoming fairy tale Time of the Dapper Men, and the pint-sized bounty hunter of Cow Boy.

DIARY OF A WIMPY KID BOOKS

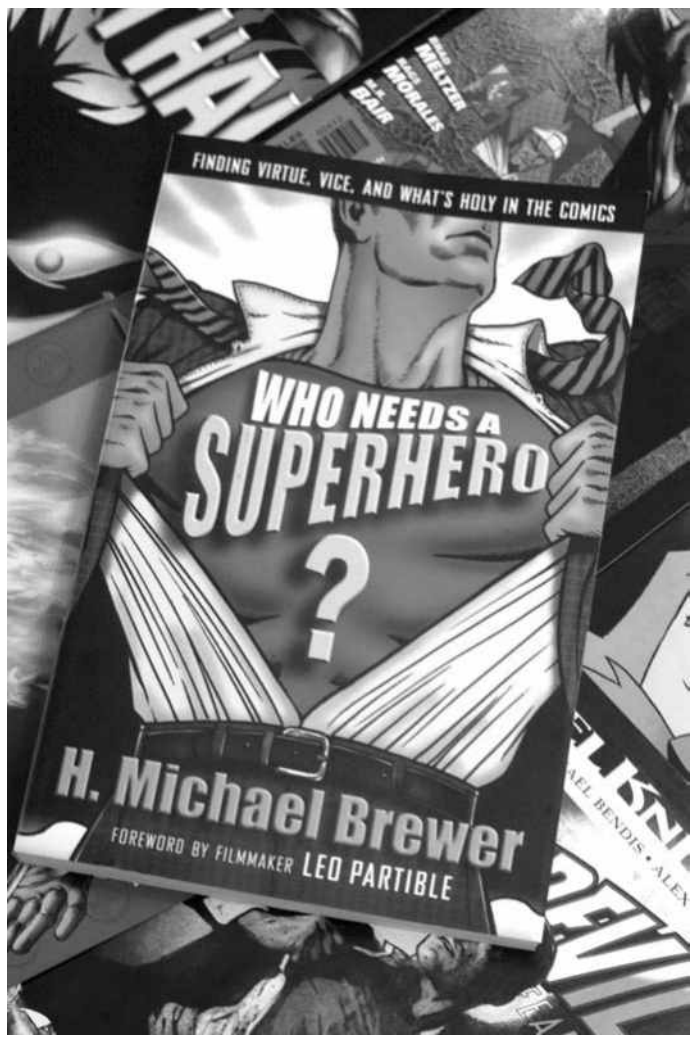
Try: Zombie Kid. The Walking Dead comics and TV series are a bit intense for youngsters, but kids can embrace the undead in this quirky blend of prose and illustrations about a zombified boy.

THE SIMPSONS

Try: Bongo Comics Free-for-All! Comic Book Guy from The Simpsons makes an appearance on the cover—in fact, 25 versions of him in various nerdy guises—and inside is a tale of Homer Simpson and a bunch of escaped bears. D'oh!

MASS EFFECT VIDEO GAMES

Try: Valiant Entertainment's preview of X-O Manowar. The first title from the relaunched 1990s comics publisher features a Visigoth warrior from A.D. 402 plucked from Earth and thrown into intergalactic space conflict.


FINDING VIRTUE, VICE, AND WHAT'S HOLY IN THE COMICS
WHO NEEDS A SUPERHERO ?
H. Michael Brewer
FOREWORD BY FILMMAKER LEO PARTIBLE

"Who Needs a Superhero? Finding Virtue, Vice and What's Holy in the Comics" by H. Michael Brewer.

MCT

The comic book series "Matterhorn the Brave."

HOUSE AND CSI

Try: The first issue of Bad Medicine, Oni Press' series about a cop who teams up with an odd doctor to solve a murder.

MONSTER-FILLED SUPERNATURAL

Try: A free preview of Anti, which follows a no-nonsense, sword-wielding woman, the demons she's hunting, who disguise themselves as humans, and a guy who may be the world's lone savior.

SUPERHERO FLICKS

Try: DC Comics' New 52 special previewing six books and a major event that will affect Batman and Superman, plus Marvel Comics' sneak peek at the upcoming Spider-Man: Season One graphic novel—both are suggested reading if you're planning to see The Dark Knight Rises and The Amazing Spider-Man movies this summer.

STAR WARS

Try: Dark Horse Comics' offering, which features a new tale of heroic smuggler Han Solo and his loyal co-pilot Chewbacca. Also included: a short story starring another space captain, Mal Reynolds, from Joss Whedon's cult TV series Firefly.

KIDS' SHOW ADVENTURE TIME

Try: The witty kid-friendly pairing of a little girl and her amphibian friend for Anna and Froga or a special issue featuring the Adventure Time duo of teenage Finn and his magical dog, Jake.

TWILIGHT

Try: An excerpt from the Manga-style graphic-novel adaptation of Cassandra Clare's first The Infernal Devices young-adult novel, Clockwork Angel, with a 19th-century teenage girl thrown into a world of vampires and witches.

THE BREAKFAST CLUB AND INDEPENDENCE DAY

Try: Worlds of Aspen 2012, which includes a selection from the Aspen Comics summer series Homecoming involving teenage kids and an alien invasion at their school.

When raindrops fall, you can be indoors stringing clay beads for colorful bracelet

By KATHY ANTONIOTTI
AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

Legend says that Rain Day in Waynesburg, Pa., began in 1874 when a local farmer said rain almost always fell on July 29, which was also his birthday.

Waynesburg is a small town of about 5,000 residents 60 miles southwest of Pittsburgh.

The farmer mentioned the phenomenon at the local drugstore, which inspired the pharmacist to continue the farmer's practice of tracking the weather each year on that date.

Although details seem to vary with the telling, town locals seem to agree that in the 1920s, Byron Daly took over the record keeping.

Daly began betting (I imagine with out-of-towners who didn't know the local tradition) that it would rain on that day. Usually, the wager was for a new hat.

Daly's son John, an attorney, was known for his soft-spoken manner and gentlemanly ways and always tipped his hat to the ladies. He took over the chores from his father and the tradition continues to this day.

A local journalist, John O'Hara, began sending stories about Rain Day to newspapers in the 1930s. Since then, such notables as Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Johnny Carson and Jay Leno have bet on the outcome of the Waynesburg weather—and always for a hat.

AKRON BEACON JOURNAL/MCT

When raindrops fall, you can be indoors stringing clay beads for colorful bracelet.

Records indicate that since 1874, it has rained 112 out of 136 years in the borough of Waynesburg.

If you can't make it to the annual Waynesburg Rain Day Festival this year but it rains in your neighborhood, learning how to make and string polymer clay beads into a bracelet is the perfect indoor activity for you.

You will need help from an adult to bake the clay.

Supplies you will need:

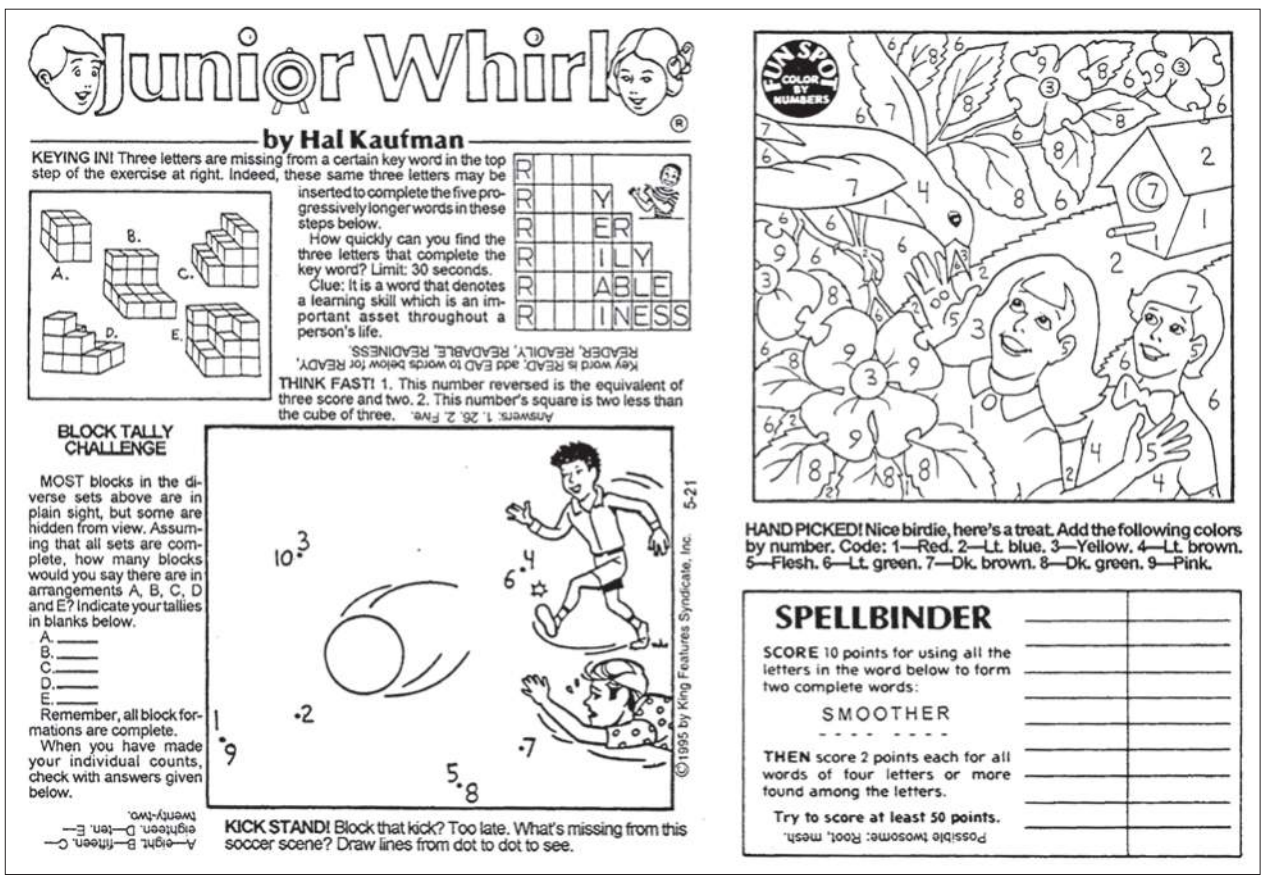
- Polymer clay in several colors.
- Fine wire, embroidery thread or elastic.
- Toothpick.
- Glass baking dish.
- Plastic beads (optional)

Using package directions, heat the oven to the proper temperature.

To make the two-color twisted beads, roll clay into strands and twist them together. Roll the strands around a toothpick, then carefully remove the toothpick.

To make round beads, work the clay into a ball, then decorate with smaller pieces of clay. You can then roll the small pieces into the large ball or leave the bead three-dimensional. Make holes in the beads with a toothpick. Make sure you make the hole large enough to slide your string through.

Bake the beads as directed. String your beads onto your wire or thread and tie off. If you would like, use plastic store-bought beads for spacers.


Junior Whirl
by Hal Kaufman
KEYING IN! Three letters are missing from a certain key word in the top step of the exercise at right. Indeed, these same three letters may be inserted to complete the five progressively longer words in these steps below.
How quickly can you find the three letters that complete the key word? Limit: 30 seconds.
Clue: It is a word that denotes a learning skill which is an important asset throughout a person's life.
R
R Y
R ER
R ILY
R ABLE
R INESS
A. B. C. D. E.
THINK FAST! 1. This number reversed is the equivalent of three score and two. 2. This number's square is two less than the cube of three.
Answers: 1. 25. 2. Five.
Key word is READ. add EAD to words below for READY, READER, READILY, READABLE, READINESS.
BLOCK TALLY CHALLENGE
MOST blocks in the diverse sets above are in plain sight, but some are hidden from view. Assuming that all sets are complete, how many blocks would you say there are in arrangements A, B, C, D and E? Indicate your tallies in blanks below.
A. ___
B. ___
C. ___
D. ___
E. ___
Remember, all block formations are complete.
When you have made your individual counts, check with answers given below.
A—eight. B—fifteen. C—eighteen. D—ten. E—twenty-two.
KICK STAND! Block that kick? Too late. What's missing from this soccer scene? Draw lines from dot to dot to see.
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FUN SPOT COLOR BY NUMBERS
HAND PICKED! Nice birdie, here's a treat. Add the following colors by number. Code: 1—Red. 2—Lt. blue. 3—Yellow. 4—Lt. brown. 5—Flesh. 6—Lt. green. 7—Dk. brown. 8—Dk. green. 9—Pink.
SPELLBINDER
SCORE 10 points for using all the letters in the word below to form two complete words:
SMOOTHER
THEN score 2 points each for all words of four letters or more found among the letters.
Try to score at least 50 points.
Possible twosome: Root, mesh.

Dog isn't welcome at wedding venues

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My fiance and I are getting married at the end of June, and we want "Suzee," our bichon frise, to be an important part of the ceremony. We agreed that she would be present as we exchange our vows, and will be in our wedding pictures.

The trouble is that we cannot find a venue that allows dogs, other than service dogs, inside. And we even had to drop one pastor who said that he would not allow Suzee to be present when he led the ceremony! Can you help?— Kurt W. in upstate New York

DEAR KURT: First of all, congratulations! Second, it's not unusual for owners to include their pets in important life events like weddings. But it can be difficult finding a venue that accepts pets.

You should hit the Internet to search for venues that welcome dogs. Dog-friendly.com is a comprehensive guide to hotels and other facilities where dogs are allowed. Another site, vowwowwow.wordpress.com, is specifically for owners looking to include their pets in their wedding ceremony. Other sources are business review sites like Yelp.com, or word of mouth from friends and neighbors.

Even before you settle on a venue, start planning how Suzee will be incorporated into not just the ceremony, but the entire day. You and your fiancee will be incredibly busy and distracted. Heidi Ganahl, CEO of Camp Bow Wow, advises couples to choose a trusted friend, or hire a professional pet sitter, to be Suzee's caretaker throughout the event. Her attendant won't just walk Suzee down the aisle to you, but also make sure she is fed, exercised, monitored and has enough "quiet time" so she doesn't get stressed out.

Best wishes on this important day!

■ ■ ■

Send your questions or tips to ask@pawscorner.com, or write to Paw's Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. For more pet care-related advice and information, visit www.pawscorner.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

by Samantha Weaver

■ It was 17th-century French author Francois de la Rochefoucauld who made the following sage observation: "It is more often from pride than from ignorance that we are so obstinately opposed to current opinions; we find the first places taken, and we do not want to be the last."

■ You probably know that Robert E. Lee was a general in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, and that he ultimately surrendered the war to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at the courthouse at Appomattox, Va. You might not know, though, that Lee had a pet hen that traveled with him everywhere. It's said that the chicken laid an egg under Lee's cot every morning.

■ The National Restaurant Association, which tracks dining statistics, says that the most popular day for eating out is Mother's Day.

■ In 1954, Swanson pioneered the frozen dinner when, after Thanksgiving sales had been lower than expected, the company found itself stuck with 10 railroad cars of unsold turkey.

■ It's a timeless truth that many kids go through an awkward, gawky period during adolescence. In the 16th century, a boy experiencing this phase was known as a hobbledehoy.

■ On the morning of a traditional Vietnamese wedding, the bride's mother visits the groom's family and presents them with a special plant, representing respect, and chalk that is pink, the color of happiness.

■ The 1935 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Carl von Ossietsky, a German writer who spoke out about Nazism in general and Adolf Hitler in particular. Hitler was so offended by the actions of the Nobel Committee in honoring his critic that he issued a decree forbidding any Germans to accept a Nobel Prize in the future.

■ ■ ■

Thought for the Day: "History is a vast early warning system."—Norman Cousins

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MAGIC MAZE ● IN —

M V S Q N K H E P B Y W T G R
O L J G C O N C L U S I O N E
B Y Y W U R E M A I R O M E M
P N R K I G D C Y H D B G Z X
V S G O Q R E M I T O O N M K
I G E E E H C A A T Y O I W U
S Q A D C H P S N K C O T S L
J H R U A I T N E S B A I S F
E O O C L E L P I C N I R P A
Y T X V P U S Q P N M K W P J
H F E C B Z Y X V U T R Q P O

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Absentia	Good taste	Play	Time
Cahoots	Memoriam	Practice	Touch
Conclusion	Order	Principle	Writing
Gear	Place	Theory	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	÷		+		11
−		÷		−	
	−		×		5
×		+		×	
	−		×		6
10		2		18	

1 2 3 3 4 5 6 8 9

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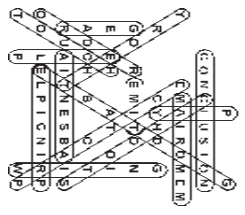
MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



IN —

GO FIGURE ANSWER

6	6	×	1	−	2
	×		+		×
5	5	×	3	−	4
	−		÷		−
11	8	+	3	÷	9

Make a picture-perfect storybook for mom

When I got going on this year's spring cleaning, the ritual started with my laptop. There weren't any dust bunnies between the keys, but when I opened my digital photo library, you would think I was a likely candidate for a TV show on hoarding. I needed to get the chaos under control, but the organizing task seemed more daunting than tackling closets or even our garage.

I signed up for a group iPhoto session at my local Apple retail store and happily got support, but not just the techie kind. As we attendees introduced ourselves, the woman next to me unapologetically admitted that her digital photo library had surged like a tsunami from 5,000 to 22,000 since the birth of her grandchild. I felt better already.

Inspired to clear out my digital clutter, I decided to tame the images while on a visit to my 87-year-old mom's home in California. "I've never seen that one," she'd say over my shoulder as I clicked through pictures of three years of milestones, meals and family trips. Once I had flagged 50 of her "must haves," including downloads I snitched from her grandkids' Facebook pages, it hit me that instead of making prints, I could secretly "publish" a photo book for a unique Mother's Day gift.

Easy to create through computer programs, photo-sharing sites, discount stores and pharmacies, a collection of photos can come together in a nifty thin volume starting at $10. Once you upload the photos to the Web, it takes about a week to get the picture-perfect storybook for Mom.

Think of more themes for other reasonably priced books that will get your photos out of hiding. It's another way to make them worth taking in the first place. Here are some ideas:

■ New baby in the house? Keep a file of the best shots of the year, and make a book annually on your child's birthday. Send it to grandparents and great-grandparents. As their annual collection grows, enjoy thumbing through the photo yearbooks with your kids when you stop by for a visit.

■ Vacation memories 2012. Create a book this year and in years to come featuring a trip you enjoy with your kids or with extended family. Make copies for each family for a holiday gift this December.

■ Mark a 2012 milestone. Assemble all the photos from your child's graduation celebration, sports season or other event, and put the milestone under one cover.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning series "Donna's Day" is airing on public television nationwide. To find more of her creative family recipes and activities, visit www.donnasday.com and link to the NEW Donna's Day Facebook fan page. Her latest book is "Donna Erickson's Fabulous Funstuff for Families."

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Good Housekeeping

Pruning tips

By SAMANTHA MAZZOTTA
KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Q: I haven't pruned many of my hedges and trees in several years, and some of them have grown wild and ragged-looking. If they're past the blooming stage, is it safe to trim them? Also, any tips to make this task easier?—Carol in Oklahoma

A: Trying to tackle all of the shrubbery and trees in your yard can be daunting, even when it hasn't been several years since their last pruning. The best thing to do is take an initial tour of your yard with notebook in hand. Mentally split the yard into several sections, and then note what needs to be done in each: trimming, pruning or even removal of foliage. Next, tackle each section one at a time. Depending on your schedule, you may need to do one section each day. A particularly foliage-heavy section may take an entire weekend. You might need help from friends or relatives to take care of large or excessively high hedges, meaning you'll need to plan a time for them to come over. And if a tree needs complex trimming—for example, its branches are encroaching on the roof or on power lines—you'll need to arrange for a professional tree trimmer to inspect it, provide an estimate and do the work. Pruning on your own takes a little practice, but don't worry too much about mistakes, as they will eventually grow out. Plants that have already bloomed can be pruned without a problem, and plants or trees that are still blooming are, by this time of year, safe to trim. As you'll likely be piling up a lot of branches and limbs, check with your local government about proper disposal of yard waste. Most have programs in place, such as scheduled pickup dates during the growing season, and guidelines for containers or bags that the trimmed branches should be placed in. If you hire a tree trimmer, be sure to ask how branches will be disposed of, and if that cost is included in the estimate.

HOME TIP: Keep hedge and tree-trimming equipment sharp, clean and lightly oiled so that they cut branches cleanly and efficiently.

Send your questions or tips to ask@thisisahammer.com, or write This Is a Hammer, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT

Arley Sakai, 9, talks to his mother, Wanda Weller-Sakai in her office at the family's home in Ojai, California, on March 2, 2012. The home is a 1970's ranch house recently remodeled in a modern style.

Making home work:

Design keeps up with home office trends

By LISA BOONE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—It happened by accident. When Kurtis and Wanda Weller Sakai went to remodel their 1971 Ojai, Calif., ranch house, the original plan was to add a fourth bedroom for Kurtis to use as an office.

"We realized that if we went over 500 square feet, the add-on permits would get very expensive," Kurtis said.

A new master suite consumed much of that square footage, so architect Darwin McCredie's shifted gears and added to the front of the house a compact 14-by-14-foot office—no bathroom, no walk-in closet, to stay under that magic number of 500.

The result is a work space that feels apart from the rest of the house, a quality enhanced by the fact that the office is accessible only by an exterior door at the end of a long covered porch.

LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT

Arley, 9, and Kurtis Sakai visit in Kurtis' office at the family's home in Ojai, California, on March 2, 2012. The home is a 1970's ranch house recently remodeled in a modern style.

"It feels a little funny going out there in my pajamas sometimes," said Kurtis, a designer of athletic footwear for clients such as Teva and Patagonia. But as someone who always had worked out of a spare bedroom, he now finds the separation that comes with the new office to be a revelation. "The detachment feels serious."

And that is the point: At a time when so many people are bringing the office home, there's a growing desire for more separation, physical and psychological, between work and personal life. One of the most recent surveys on the subject, by the project management software company Wrike, found that, among 1,000 respondents, 83 percent worked from home at least part of the day.

"It is such a pleasant thing to truly have a sense of separation," Kurtis said. "My office might as well be down the street. It's a physical and mental space where I keep all of my problems. You can truly forget about your work and not have it stare at you while you're walking down the hallway."

At a home tour organized by the American Institute of Architects' Los Angeles chapter last month, three of the five homes had a detached office. It's an increasingly common solution for L.A.'s creative class, including architects.

"Architects are very happy about this solution as they reduce overhead costs and have the opportunity to spend more time with their family," said Carlo Caccavale, associate director of the Los Angeles AIA.

Bill Beauter, co-founder of Make Architecture in Los Angeles, designed a 200-square-foot detached work space for "The Office" actor Rainn Wilson. The architect recalled starting his practice a dozen years ago with Jess Mullen-Carey out of Beauter's garage.

"There are benefits to not having to go anyplace, especially if you want to tackle something immediately," Beauter said. "But some people just don't want to encumber their personal space."

For many, an office at home but not in the home is proving to be the best way to reconcile work and family life. Filmmaker and commercial director John Dolan said he chose a detached structure in his Studio City, Calif., backyard even though he could work in an office in Hollywood. He likes the quiet and privacy. He also likes being by his two boys, ages 4 and 5.

"That is the biggest challenge of working from home," Dolan said. "Being in a detached space helps a lot. But it's hard for the kids to understand that I'm working." A plus: "being able to have lunch with them and clear my head by jumping on the trampoline with them."

Developer Billy Lehman recently installed a K4 Kithaus, a prefab design often used as an extra bedroom or office, in the Brentwood backyard of a writer-producer couple with kids. The couple found it was impossible to get work done in the home, so they added a dedicated building in back. (See related article on prefab offices.)

Lehman and wife Dana Goodyear, a writer for the New Yorker, work from home in a separate structure too.

"The psychological journey to walk from the house to the guest house is gigantic," Lehman said. "We bring our work as close to where our heart life is. Working from home has been amazing for me. For the last 19 months I can see my baby whenever I want. It gives me great purpose and motivation in my work."

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Spinach and Cheddar Whole Wheat Strata

Slices of firm whole-wheat bread are layered with frozen chopped spinach and sharp cheddar cheese, then baked in a light egg custard. Assemble a day ahead, refrigerate overnight, and bake the next morning for a delicious brunch. Or assemble and bake the same day and serve with a salad for a light dinner.

4 teaspoons Dijon mustard
8 slices firm whole-wheat sandwich bread
1/2 cup (2 ounces) shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 package (10 ounces) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
2 cups low-fat (1 percent) milk
4 large eggs
4 large egg whites
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper

1 Grease 8 by 8-inch glass baking dish. Spread 1/2 teaspoon mustard on 1 side of each bread slice. Place 4 slices bread in baking dish, mustard side up. Top with half of cheese, all of spinach, then remaining cheese. Place remaining bread slices in dish, mustard side up.

2 In medium bowl, with wire whisk or fork, beat milk and remaining ingredients until blended. Slowly pour egg mixture over bread slices. Prick bread with fork at 1-inch intervals and press slices down so egg mixture can be absorbed more easily.

3 Cover dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 30 minutes or overnight to allow egg mixture to be absorbed thoroughly.

4 To bake, preheat oven to 350 F. Uncover baking dish and bake strata 55 minutes to 1 hour, until knife inserted 1 inch from center comes out clean. Remove strata from oven and let stand 5 minutes before serving.

■ Each serving: About 400 calories, 11g total fat (4g saturated), 155mg cholesterol, 640mg sodium, 39g total carbs, 5g dietary fiber, 18g protein. ***(Hearst Communications, Inc.)***

Life & Style

Vogue bans too-skinny models from its pages

NEW YORK (AP)—Vogue magazine, perhaps the world's top arbiter of style, is making a statement about its own models: Too young and too thin is no longer in.

The 19 editors of Vogue magazines around the world made a pact to project the image of healthy models, according to a Conde Nast International announcement Thursday.

They agreed to "not knowingly work with models under the age of 16 or who appear to have an eating disorder," and said they will ask casting directors to check IDs at photo shoots and fashion shows and for ad campaigns.

The move is an important one for the fashion world, said former model Sara Ziff, who was discovered at 14 and has since founded The Model Alliance, dedicated to improving the working conditions of models and persuading the industry to take better care of its young.

"Most editions of Vogue regularly hire models who are minors, so for Vogue to commit to no longer using models under the age of 16 marks an evolution in the industry," she said. "We hope other magazines and fashion brands will follow Vogue's impressive lead."

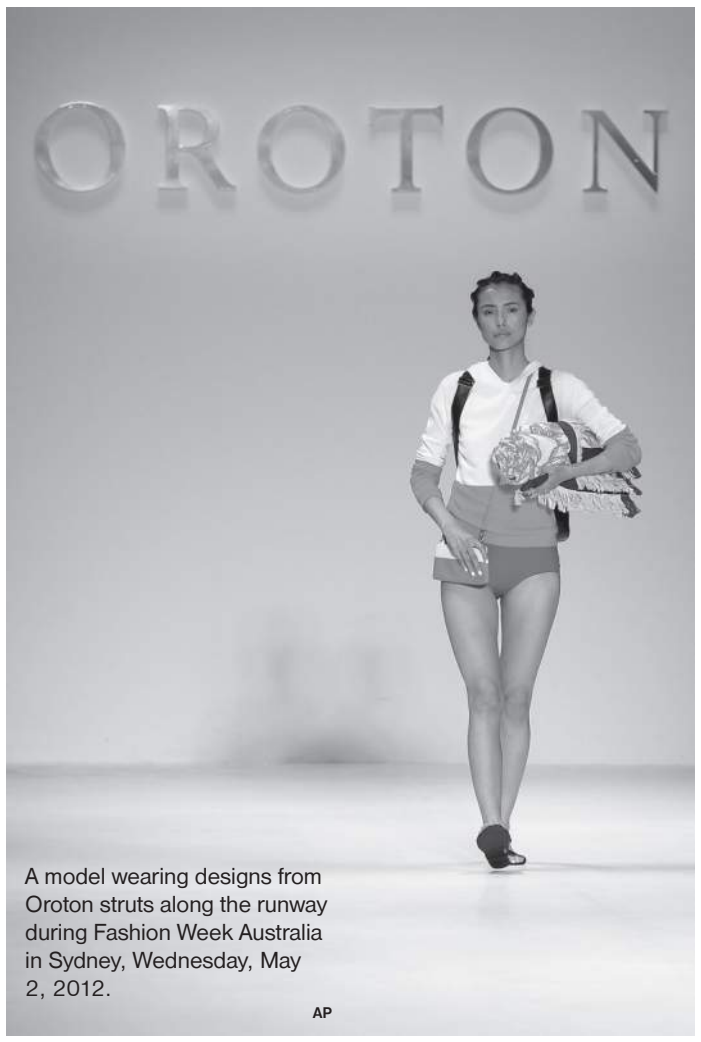
American, French, Chinese and British editions of the fashion glossies are among those that will start following the new guidelines with their June issues; the Japanese edition will begin with its July book.

"Vogue believes that good health is beautiful. Vogue Editors around the world want the magazines to reflect their commitment to the health of the models who appear on the pages and the well-being of their readers," said Conde Nast International Chairman Jonathan Newhouse in a statement.

Models' health—and especially their weight—has been a lightning rod the past few years, especially after the death of two models from apparent complications from eating disorders in 2006-07, but the focus, until now, has been on runway fashion shows.

The Council of Fashion Designers of America adopted a voluntary initiative in 2007, which emphasizes age minimums and healthy working environments during New York Fashion Week, and London Fashion Week designers sign a contract with the British Fashion Council to use models who are at least 16.

The primary fashion organizations in Italy and Spain banned catwalk models who fall below a certain Body Mass Index level, and earlier this year, Israel's government passed an anti-skinny-model law.



A model wearing designs from Oroton struts along the runway during Fashion Week Australia in Sydney, Wednesday, May 2, 2012.

AP

Still, there is persistent criticism that the fashion world creates a largely unattainable and unhealthy standard that particularly affects impressionable young girls.

"We know that there is an impact for young girls—and boys, by the way—of what is put in front of them in terms of media," said Elissa J. Brown, professor of psychology at St. John University and founder of The Partners Program, a specialized therapy program for children and adolescents.

A change in what they see on the pages of prestigious fashion magazines could change the image of what they would strive for, she said.

It wouldn't hurt for parents to take a look at healthier looking models, too, she added. "I'm a mother and I hear other mothers talk about the parts of their bodies they don't like in front of their daughters instead of talking about health. If the message becomes about health, it could have a tremendous impact."

The Vogue guidelines are largely similar to the CFDA's—no surprise since U.S. editor-in-chief Anna Wintour was instrumental in crafting them.

"CFDA is pleased to see all the Vogue magazines unite in support of model health," CFDA CEO Steven Kolb said. "This increased level of support makes the message of `Health is Beauty' even stronger."

Conde Nast, in its announcement, recognized that fashion models serve as role models for "many women," and the publisher wants to ensure that the models in its pages "are well cared for and educated in ways that will encourage and help them to take care of themselves, addressing as many of the pressing issues relating to ill-health in the industry as can realistically be tackled."

Ziff said the age restriction is important for other reasons, too.

"The use of underaged models is linked to financial exploitation, eating disorders, interrupted schooling, and contributes to models' overall lack of empowerment in the workplace," she said. "We simply believe that 14 is too young to be working in this very grown-up industry, and we're glad that Condé Nast International is making this commitment.

In addition to agreeing not to knowingly work with models under 16 or with eating disorders, the Vogue pact says the magazines will help "structure mentoring programs" for younger models and raise awareness of the problem of model health. The magazines said they would encourage healthy working conditions backstage and encourage designers "to consider the consequences of unrealistically small sample sizes of their clothing, which limits the range of women who can be photographed in their clothes, and encourages the use of extremely thin models."

Conde Nast publishes other magazines, including Glamour and Allure, but a spokeswoman said there are no current plans for these guidelines to be adopted across the company.

Runway model Coco Rocha applauded the changes.

"I've long been a vocal supporter of setting reasonable standards in the modeling industry," she said in an email.

Model, French magnate in NY child support duel

NEW YORK (AP)—She has one of the world's most famous faces. He's a billionaire fashion CEO. And their 5-year-old son is at the center of a bitter, big-money child support fight.

Supermodel Linda Evangelista and ex-boyfriend Francois-Henri Pinault, a French business tycoon now married to actress Salma Hayek, faced off Thursday in the utilitarian environs of a Manhattan family court.

She wants a court to make him pitch in for child-rearing expenses she has tallied at nearly $50,000 a month—for armed bodyguards and a round-the-clock nanny, among other costs.

The trial is offering a public glimpse into the lives of the boldface and beautiful, from the vagaries of a modeling career to the peripatetic lifestyle of a movie star's child. The first day of testimony included a detailed description of a $12 million mansion and Pinault discussing his brief breakup with Hayek before their 2009 marriage.

Evangelista, the 1980s and 1990s magazine-cover fixture who famously quipped that supermodels "don't wake up for less than $10,000 a day," looked on with somewhat anguished poise in a demure black knee-length skirt, flower-patterned blouse and tan stiletto pumps.

AP

Linda Evangelista leaves Manhattan Family Court Thursday, May 3, 2012, in New York.

At one point, she let out a faint, frustrated "ohhhhh!" and raked her hair with her hands when Pinault's lawyer, David Aaronson, said she was looking for $46,000 a month. While that's what she said she's spending on the child, Evangelista's lawyer said Thursday she isn't asking for any particular amount.

Although she willingly paid all the boy's expenses for most of his life, her roughly $1.8 million-a-year income took a major hit last year as a contract with L'Oreal ended, said her lawyer, William Beslow.

"It became necessary for her to go to the bullpen and ask the father for help," he told the court. "Ms. Evangelista is not looking to piggyback the lifestyle of Mr. Pinault."

But Pinault's camp says the supermodel is doing just that. A potential $46,000-a-month tab is "just ridiculous," Aaronson said.

Evangelista, now 46, and Pinault, 49, dated in late 2005 to early 2006, though he testified Thursday that the trans-Atlantic couple spent only about seven days together over that time.

Pinault is the chief executive of PPR, which owns Gucci, Yves St. Laurent and other luxury brands. He makes about $4 million annually from a complex of his family's companies; Forbes recently estimated the family's net worth at $13 billion.

Evangelista didn't publicly identify Pinault as the father of the boy, Augustin, known as Augie, until last year, when she went to court against the businessman. In the meantime, he and Hayek had a daughter, Valentina, and later married.

Clark Gregg's 5 favorite sci-fi movies

LOSANGELES (AP)—There's a little movie called "The Avengers" coming out this weekend. You might have heard something about it.

Among its impressive ensemble cast is Clark Gregg, returning from previous Marvel movies as Agent Coulson, Nick Fury's no-nonsense, right-hand man at S.H.I.E.L.D. In all his copious free time this week, Gregg was kind enough to choose his five favorite science fiction films.

Gregg

Here they are in his own thoughtful words, with the last being most favorite. He's got good taste:

■ "Another Earth" (2011): I saw this at Sundance in 2011 and was completely mesmerized by its low-budget, idea-driven premise, which, like the best sci-fi, uses an alternative, near-future reality to provide a unique perspective on who we are now. Mike Cahill's powerful direction of a clever, haunting script by the movie's beautiful, unknown lead, Brit Marling, along with an emotional but restrained performance by William Mapother, make this a deeply resonant film about grief and redemption.

■ "Alien" (1979): This belongs at the top of about five different lists, including best thriller and best horror film, as well. Ridley Scott did so many things right here—from the grimy, lived-in world of the Nostromo mixed with H.R. Giger's eerily seductive design to the perfect cast and Sigourney Weaver's bad-ass performance. I also love the way Scott keeps the alien unseen for so much of the gut-churning build up, then delivers one of the most terrifying creatures ever seen on screen. I still can't watch this one after about 8 p.m.

■ "The Matrix" (1999): The ultimate popcorn movie. I accompanied a friend to the premiere with no idea what I was walking into and had about as much fun as I've ever had in a movie theater. Spectacular, mind-bending premise which provides the seductive setting for a story delivered with style and precision and more shell casings than all the "Rambo" movies combined. The sequels never quite lived up to this promise, but I can't hold that against this perfect piece of wired-action pie.

■ "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968): Stanley Kubrick at his visionary finest. My dad took me to see this when I was about 9 and I was changed forever. Kubrick's visceral and prescient take on such themes as artificial intelligence, extraterrestrials and their role in human evolution was adapted with novelist Arthur C. Clarke from one of his short stories. From the astonishing first act at the dawn of man to the hallucinatory, largely non-verbal climax, the film takes more risks than any 10 studio films made today. I watch it over and over and always experience something different.

■ "Blade Runner" (1982): Holy crap, I love this movie. I've seen it countless times in all its incarnations, read Phillip K. Dick's "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" on which it's loosely based and never flip past it on cable. I love the futuristic neo-noir tone, the moody Vangelis score and the pitch-perfect performances by the entire cast, especially Harrison Ford, Sean Young, Daryl Hannah and, above all, the young, Brando-esque Rutger Hauer. His turn as the murderous replicant Roy Batty on a desperate, all-too-human quest to prolong his artificially shortened life in a rain-soaked, post-apocalyptic, 21st century Los Angeles always breaks my heart. There may be a few logic issues here and there, but the whole thing is so damn sexy that you don't even care.

Another finalist takes a bow on 'American Idol'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—It was an unfortunate night for Skylar Laine on "American Idol."

The 18-year-old country rocker from Brandon, Miss., who imbued Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Fortunate Son" and Dusty Springfield's "Say You Love Me" with her twangy sensibilities on Wednesday's show was revealed to have received the fewest viewer votes Thursday on the Fox singing contest.

Laine was joined at the bottom by Hollie Cavanagh, the 18-year-old balladeer from McKinney, Texas, who opened Wednesday's installment with a pop-infused take on Ike and Tina Turner's "River Deep Mountain High," and later dialed it down with the Leona Lewis hit "Bleeding Love."

"They both sang their faces off last night," said "Idol" judge Randy Jackson.

The other singers remaining in the competition are booming 20-year-old gospel singer Joshua Ledet of Westlake, La.; bluesy 21-year-old pawn shop worker Phillip Phillips of Leesburg, Ga.; and budding 16-year-old pop diva Jessica Sanchez of San Diego.

The four remaining finalists will return to the stage next week.

AP

In this April 25, 2012 file photo released by Fox, contestant Skylar Laine performs on the singing competition series "American Idol," in Los Angeles.

Moore trades @mrskutcher for @justdemi on Twitter

In this Oct. 17, 2011 file photo, actress Demi Moore attends the premiere of "Margin Call" in New York. AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Demi Moore is no longer (at)mrskutcher, in real life or on Twitter.

The 49-year-old actress changed her Twitter name to (at)justdemi on Thursday.

Moore and Ashton Kutcher, who often used the micro-blogging site to post pictures of themselves and proclaim their love for one another, announced the end of their marriage in November. In April, Moore asked her followers on the site for suggestions for a new handle.

TV personality Piers Morgan suggested, "How about (at)mrsmorgan?"

Moore said she would "have to get clever" because so many names on the popular site have already been claimed.

She wrote Thursday that it was "so hard finding a name that was fun somewhat playful and available." She said her new name "could grow on me."

Moore has nearly 5 million followers on Twitter.

'Bachelor' host Harrison, wife ending marriage

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"The Bachelor" host Chris Harrison is going be a bachelor again.

A spokeswoman for the 40-year-old TV personality said Thursday that Harrison and his wife are ending their 18-year marriage.

Harrison has hosted the ABC dating series and its various spin-offs since "The Bachelor" debuted in 2002.

"Though we have made this incredibly difficult decision to separate, our love and mutual respect remain, and we look forward to sharing in the lives of our wonderful children," the couple said in a joint statement.

They have two children together. The eighth season of "The Bachelorette" is set to premiere May 14.

Mick Jagger gets first hosting gig at 'SNL' finale

NEW YORK (AP)—Mick Jagger will test his comic chops later this month as host of the "Saturday Night Live" season finale.

The Rolling Stones frontman has been a musical guest twice before on the long-running NBC show, and the network said Thursday he will perform musically on the May 19 finale. But he has never been host before, a job that usually requires participation in several comic skits.

The Rolling Stones mark their 50th anniversary as a band this year, but have yet to announce any activities to commemorate the occasion.

Jagger

Jagger last year put out a disc as part of a group called Super-Heavy, which also included reggae singer Damian Marley and former Eurythmics founder Dave Stewart.

Kim Hyun-joong to kick off pop tour in Singapore

SINGAPORE (AP)—Korean entertainer Kim Hyun-joong plans to kick off his "2012 Asia Fan Meeting Tour" by high-fiving all 3,000 people expected to turn up—a first for a pop star visiting Singapore.

Event organizer "Running Into The Sun" said the original plan was for Kim to high-five 500 fans selected from the audience but Kim was insisting on high-fiving everyone.

"I know it's not going to be easy and I hope that even if it is a really short moment of high-five, the fans would know how much I appreciate their effort and support," he said.

He will meet his fans at the stadium exit after the event ends.

Kim told The Associated Press on Thursday he's confident security won't be an issue.

The tour that starts Friday includes Hong Kong, Taiwan, China and Thailand. Organizers say Kim will high-five everyone at fan events in Hong Kong and Taiwan, too.

Kim is part of the boy band SS501 and became hugely popular across Asia after appearing in the 2009 Korean TV drama "Boys Over Flowers."

His solo debut album, "Break Down," was released in 2011.

In this Sunday, Aug. 14, 2011 file photo, South Korean singer Kim Hyun-joong smiles during his four-day tour in Taipei, Taiwan. AP

Artist can achieve his dream but first he must find a job

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I'm an artist and budding filmmaker with a B.A. degree. My problems are my job situation and where I live.

My dad has told me that—like him and his father—my brother and I share a similar problem. We all have trouble getting and keeping jobs. We never seem to get ahead or be content or comfortable. On my mother's side, however, she, her father, her brother and my cousin all have held steady jobs. Why is that?

As an artist, I feel I don't really fit into any job description. Mom would like me to work for the federal government like she does, but I don't want to. I have had people let me down the past few years, and I have fought depression and personal attacks from friends and classmates who all told me to give up and get a "real" job. It makes me even more determined to realize my dream, but it's getting harder. Can you advise me?

SWIMMING AGAINST THE CURRENT

DEAR SWIMMING: I'll try. Most people work so they can have food on their table and a roof over their heads. Their jobs serve a purpose. I agree with your mother that you should have one—but I wouldn't presume to dictate what kind.

For your father to imply that you will never get or be able to hold a permanent job is wrong and unfair to you, and I urge you not to fall into that kind of self-fulfilling rut. You can hold a job and pursue your art and filmmaking on your own time, although your success may take longer than you would otherwise like. Many others have done it, and so can you. For inspiration, talk to your mother's side of the family. You share their genes, too.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I live in a different state from the one where I grew up. Twice a week I call my elderly parents to touch base. While I enjoy speaking with Dad, my mother turns these calls into a trial.

Conversations with her are one-sided. She rarely asks me how I'm doing, and when I tell her things, she ignores or quickly glosses over my news and redirects the subject to herself. She rambles on about trivial events in her life, barely acknowledging me on the other end of the line.

Some days I am patient and tolerate it. On others, my fuse is shorter and I ask her to focus more on conversing with me, which offends her, and she accuses me of being rude.

I am an interesting, successful man who is frustrated my mother can't connect with me more meaningfully. I don't see my parents often and would like to be part of their lives. Mom is not by nature a generous person, but the telephone seems to magnify her self-absorption and lack of curiosity. Do you have any thoughts on how to handle her?

LISTENING BUT NOT HEARD

DEAR LISTENING: Yes. It appears that you are seeking validation from your mother that you may have never received from her. It's regrettable, but at her stage of life, you are not going to change her. She may be rambling because few people are willing to tolerate her self-centeredness. On the days you are feeling more patient, let her ramble on; on those that you don't feel that way, keep the conversation upbeat but brief.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

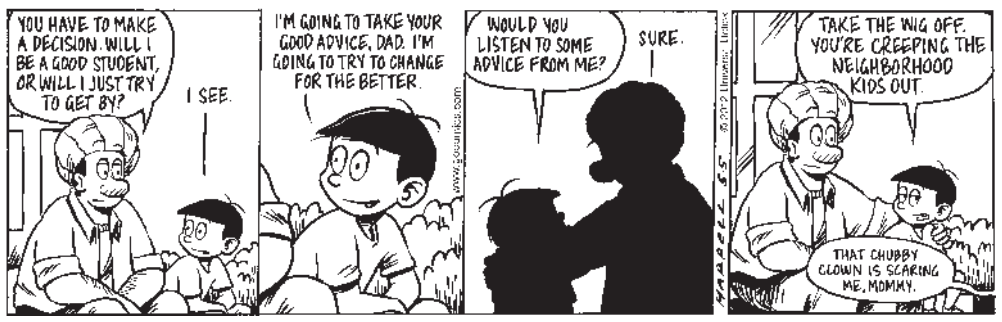
LOOK AT THIS, DAD! I'VE GOT FIVE DOLLARS IN HERE! I'M RICH!
I'VE BEEN SAVING MY CHANGE FOR WEEKS AND WEEKS, AND LOOK HOW MUCH I'VE GOT! GUESS WHAT I'M GOING TO DO WITH IT!
OPEN A SAVINGS ACCOUNT?
I'LL BET I KNOW WHY YOU GUYS DON'T GET INVITED TO PARTIES.
EVERY TIME YOU MAKE A DEPOSIT, YOU CAN THINK, "OH BOY, ANOTHER TWO MINUTES AT COLLEGE."

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

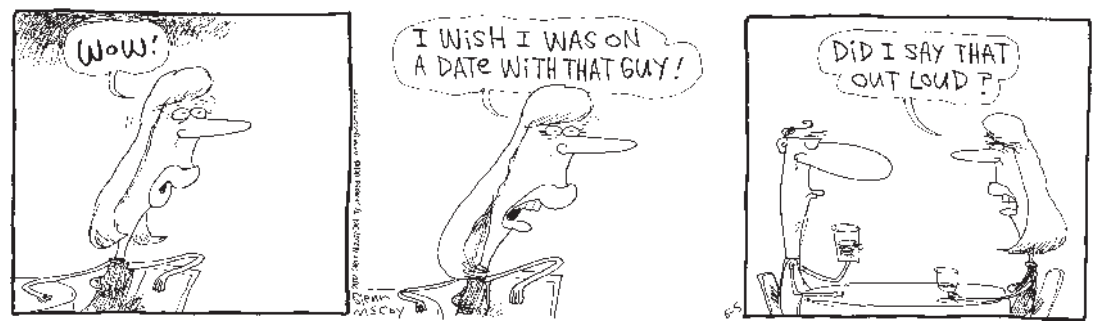
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


YOU HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION. WILL I BE A GOOD STUDENT, OR WILL I JUST TRY TO GET BY?
I SEE.
I'M GOING TO TAKE YOUR GOOD ADVICE, DAD. I'M GOING TO TRY TO CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.
WOULD YOU LISTEN TO SOME ADVICE FROM ME?
SURE.
TAKE THE WIG OFF. YOU'RE CREEPING THE NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS OUT.
THAT CHUBBY CLOWN IS SCARING ME, MOMMY.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

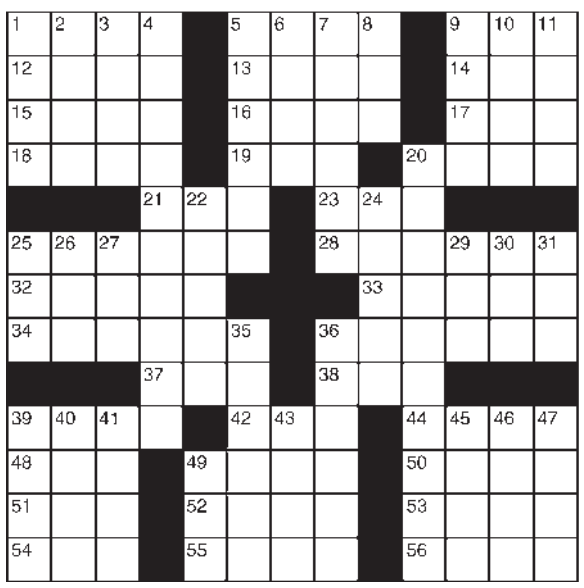
ACROSS
1 Ringer
5 Radiate
9 Morning moisture
12 Met melody
13 Zilch
14 Leading lady
15 Chew away at
16 Initial stake
17 Wrong (Pref.)
18 Belgrade native
19 Farm sound
20 Leave at the altar
21 Sturgeon product
23 Airport org.
25 "Really?!"
28 Forth
32 Mountain nymph
33 West-minster or Downton
34 "The Jazz Singer," notably
36 Illusion
37 Moray or conger
38 Hearty brew
39 Cher-ished
42 Spring mo.
44 Helps
48 Scull tool
49 Lovers' quarrel
50 Recog-nize
51 "Guin-ness Book" suffix
52 Catch sight of
53 Sicilian volcano
54 Pigpen
55 Sport
56 Optimistic

DOWN
1 Super-market supply
2 Sea eagle
3 Perjurer
4 Criminal
5 Dental coat
6 It preceded stereo
7 Entirely
8 Ball-bearing gizmo
9 Ms. Moore
10 Malefic
11 Opposite of 40-Down
20 Really hard candy
22 Nostalgia-inducing song
24 Symbol of slowness
25 Speck
26 — pro nobis
27 Aviv preceder
29 Lawyers' org.
30 — U.S. Pat. Off.
31 Coloring agent
35 Pass by
36 Constant sufferer
39 Serves the purpose
40 Opposite of 11-Down
41 Bohe-mian
43 One of the Three Bears
45 Grooving on
46 Puts on
47 Vacillate
49 Stitch

Solution time: 27 mins.

E	R	A	■	B	I	T	E	■	M	A	R	G
M	A	N	■	L	I	T	I	S	■	O	C	H	O
S	H	A	M	B	L	E	S	■	T	H	E	O
■	■	C	U	L	■	■	■	A	H	E	A	D
A	N	O	S	E	■	S	E	R	E	■	■	■
I	O	N	S	■	S	H	A	M	P	O	O	K
L	A	D	■	S	O	O	T	Y	■	P	E	A
S	H	A	M	P	O	O	S	■	J	U	L	Y
■	■	■	Y	A	N	K	■	H	A	L	L	E
B	L	O	O	M	■	■	D	U	D	E	■	■
R	O	M	P	■	S	H	A	M	A	N	I	C
A	C	A	I	■	P	O	L	O	■	C	R	O
D	O	N	A	■	A	P	E	R	■	E	K	E

Yesterday's answer 5-5



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute. touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Chris Brown, 23; Adele, 24; Henry Cavill, 29; Danielle Fishel, 31.

Happy Birthday: Discussing ideas with peers will help you gather the assistance you need to turn your plans into a reality. Your ability to be the driving force of any project will allow you to prove how responsible you are and how much you have to offer. Success is within reach. Your numbers are 7, 13, 15, 22, 31, 40, 43.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Communication is highlighted. Be open about whatever is on your mind. Share with your friends or lover. A decision regarding a partnership will help improve your lifestyle. A little extra will get you a whole lot in return. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't get down, get moving. Attend a social event. Take on extra responsibility and show everyone what you have to offer. You'll attract attention, and your efforts will lead to interesting opportunities that can enhance your personal life. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Focus on finances. Use your skills or find a service you can offer for a fee to boost your income. Don't sit back waiting for opportunities to come to you. Be the driving force and you will find a way to improve your lifestyle. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Opportunities will arise if you participate. Getting involved in a program or fundraiser, or even just helping someone in need, will give you the chance to meet someone who has something to offer in return. Taking action will pay off. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Think before you act. Emotional matters will develop with someone dear to your heart if you are insensitive. You can make changes, but before moving forward, get approval from the people who will be affected by your decision. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Concentrate on what you are doing. Broaden your options by getting involved in informative activities or events. Learning about different lifestyles will help you choose what's best for you. Start something new and you will prosper. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You'll be tempted to overspend. Don't try to buy someone's attention or donate to a cause you know little about. Impulsive spending will leave you short. Charity begins at home. You can make improvements without going over budget. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Make changes at home. Do the work and take the credit. A chance to enhance a partnership will also lead to greater financial stability. Sort out any matters you feel might pose a problem in the future, and move forward with your plans. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Share your ideas and don't be afraid to ask for help. You can cover a lot of ground if you roll up your shirtsleeves and head for the finish line. You will improve a relationship if you compromise. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Take on the bulk of the work instead of arguing over who is responsible for what. At the end of the day, it will be you everyone is indebted to for your stellar contribution. Your hands-on help will be rewarded. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Be careful what you say. Feelings will be hurt easily if you aren't discreet and sensitive. Overdoing it in any way will come back to haunt you. Stick to simple, moderate plans and you will avoid opposition. Make love, not war. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't let anyone convince you to do something you don't want to do. You won't do a good job or be happy if you allow others to manipulate you. Invest time, effort and money in you and the projects you want to pursue. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are intense, reliable and relentless. You are a leader and a humanitarian.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	9	2			8			
8					1	2		
					5	7	9	
						5	6	
	2						7	
	6	4						
	7	8	2					
		1	3					2
			6			1	4	

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 5/05

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

7	8	2	5	9	6	3	1	4
3	9	5	4	7	1	2	6	8
4	1	6	8	2	3	7	5	9
8	5	4	3	1	9	6	7	2
6	2	3	7	5	8	9	4	1
9	7	1	6	4	2	8	3	5
2	6	9	1	3	5	4	8	7
5	3	7	2	8	4	1	9	6
1	4	8	9	6	7	5	2	3

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 5/05

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

WIDE-STRIPED SWEATERS **Solution: 8 letters**

C	D	S	E	C	N	A	R	A	E	P	P	A	C	C
T	A	E	P	O	H	S	U	L	P	E	C	O	O	L
U	S	S	T	O	R	E	H	A	Z	A	L	P	L	A
N	W	T	H	A	R	M	T	I	E	O	R	U	A	S
I	O	Ⓢ	Y	M	I	T	S	J	R	D	W	T	U	S
C	O	Ⓝ	C	L	E	L	Y	S	E	T	I	E	S	I
T	L	Ⓤ	S	R	E	R	C	R	D	R	H	S	A	C
S	F	Ⓖ	N	E	N	L	E	I	A	E	S	G	C	R
F	M	O	V	O	O	D	G	B	T	Y	S	E	I	B
L	Y	E	S	T	I	N	D	B	L	L	O	I	Y	L
L	O	A	H	O	I	E	W	E	A	V	E	N	G	E
K	E	I	R	T	D	M	O	D	E	R	N	B	P	N
S	N	B	T	N	R	L	A	I	R	E	T	A	M	D
G	M	I	A	T	S	I	A	W	V	C	H	E	S	T
E	F	B	T	L	E	R	M	F	A	S	H	I	O	N

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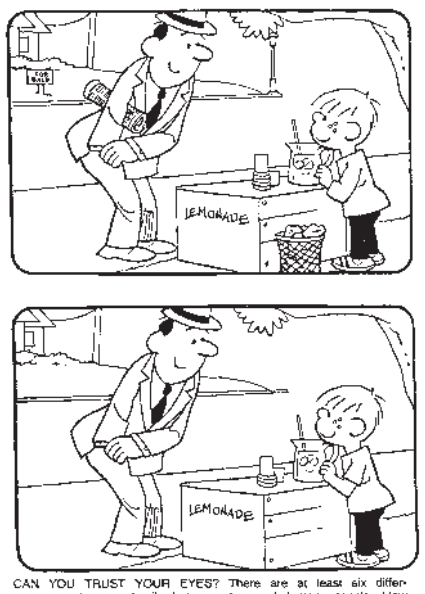
Appearance, Banded, Belt, Blend, Cashmere, Casual, Chest, Classic, Clothing, Colors, Cool, Cotton, Cuff, Design, Detail, Embroidered, Fashion, Fitting, Hems, Jersey, Knit, Label, Light, Material, Modern, Pattern, Plush, Rayon, Ribbed, Season, Shape, Shirt, Side, Size, Sleeve, Slim, Snug, Soft, Sporty, Store, Strap, Style, Trim, Tunic, Waist, Wear, Weave, Wool, Yarns

Yesterday's Answer: Russian Blue

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



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CAN YOU TRUST YOUR EYES? There are at least six differences in drawing details between top and bottom panels. How quickly can you find them? Check answers with those below.

Differences: 1. Sign is missing. 2. Paper is missing. 3. Lamppost's missing. 4. Cup stack is lower. 5. Trash basket is missing. 6. Sleeve is shorter.

Wishing Well®

5	3	4	5	4	6	8	4	5	2	8	5	6
S	F	E	L	N	S	L	D	O	B	I	W	U
3	8	5	3	4	7	5	3	2	5	7	2	3
I	F	B	N	A	B	U	I	U	T	E	S	S
6	2	5	3	7	3	4	3	7	8	4	3	5
C	I	S	H	F	P	N	R	L	E	O	O	U
6	4	7	6	4	7	8	2	8	6	5	2	8
C	L	E	E	D	X	I	N	M	S	R	E	P
4	3	7	6	8	3	2	6	8	4	5	6	8
F	J	I	S	R	E	S	I	O	E	E	S	V
3	5	8	6	5	4	3	4	3	2	7	6	5
C	C	E	C	L	U	T	D	S	S	B	L	I
2	7	6	5	8	2	6	7	5	6	2	6	2
T	L	O	M	S	R	S	E	B	E	I	R	P

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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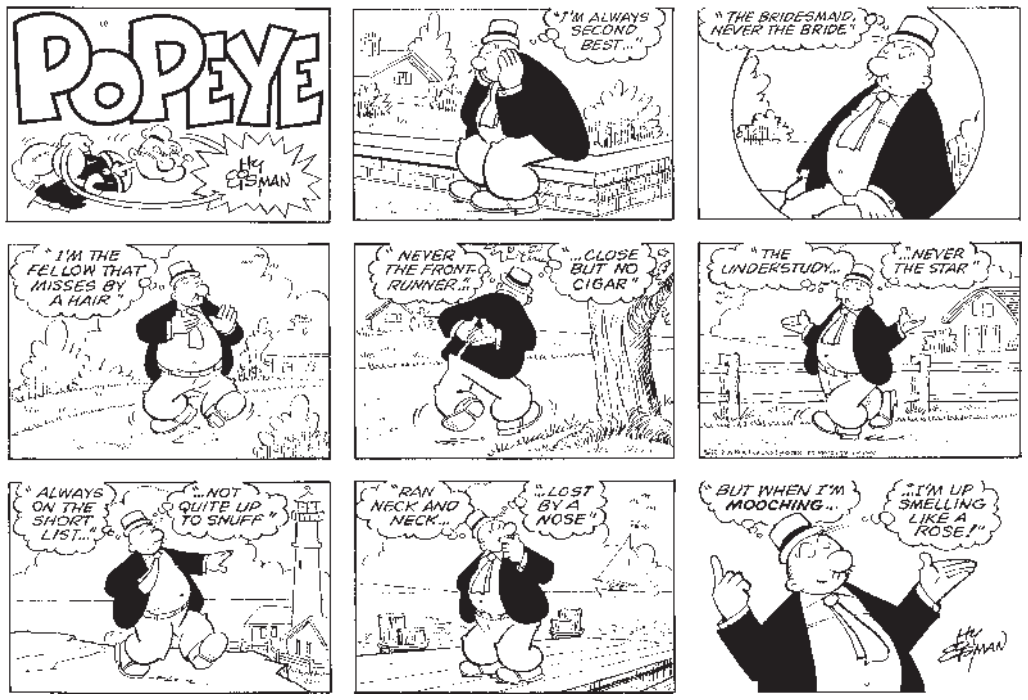
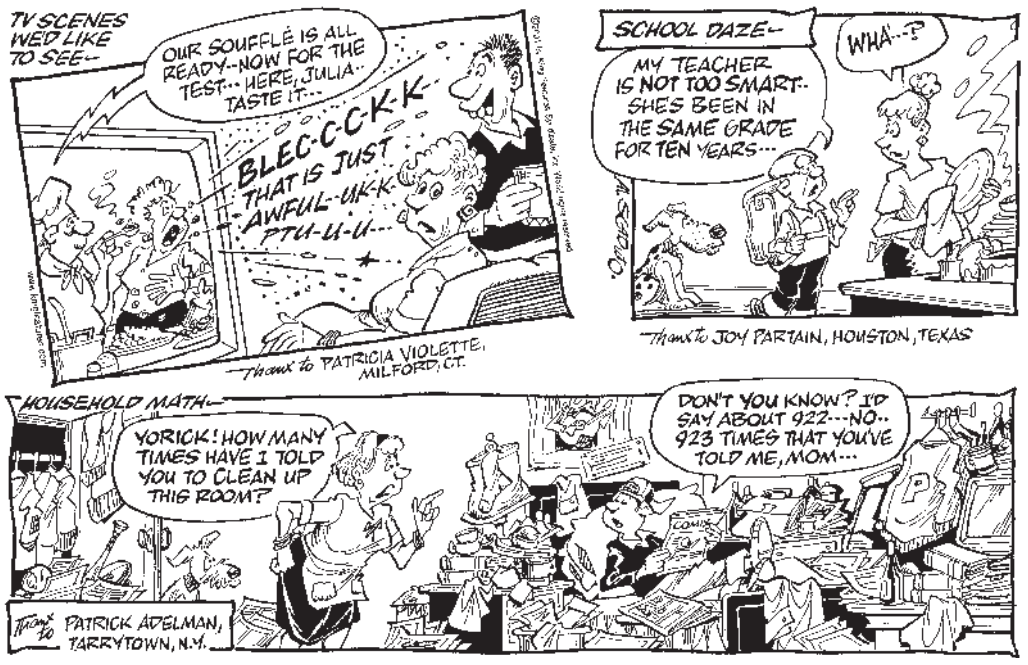
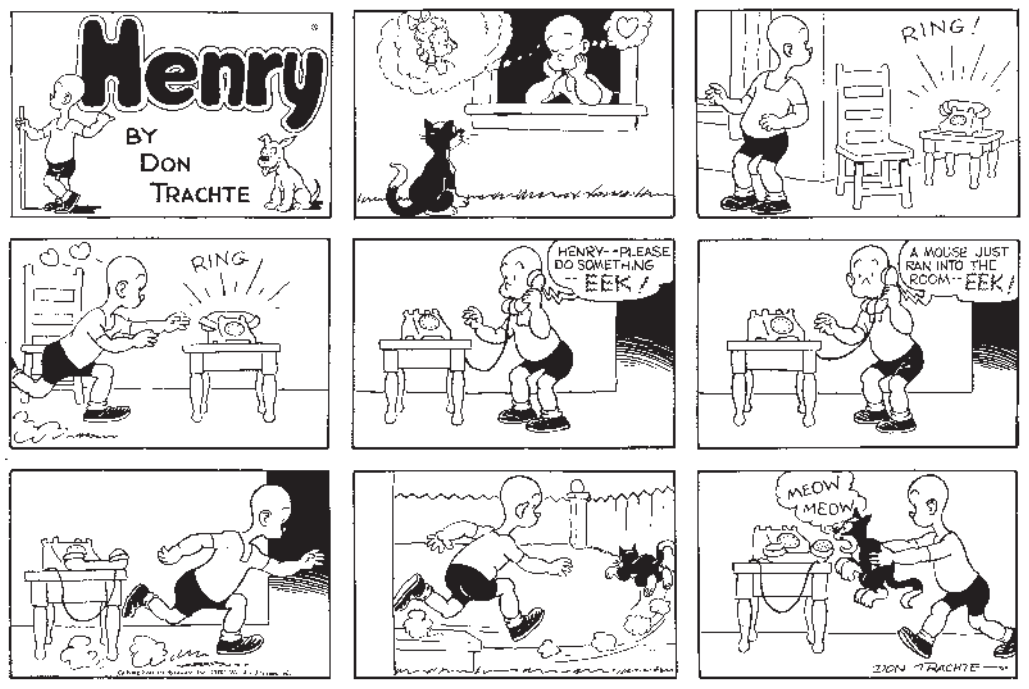

POPEYE
Hy Eisman
"I'M ALWAYS SECOND BEST..."
"THE BRIDESMAID, NEVER THE BRIDE"
"I'M THE FELLOW THAT MISSES BY A HAIR"
"NEVER THE FRONT-RUNNER..."
"...CLOSE BUT NO CIGAR"
"THE UNDERSTUDY..."
"...NEVER THE STAR"
"ALWAYS ON THE SHORT LIST..."
"...NOT QUITE UP TO SNUFF"
"RAN NECK AND NECK..."
"...LOST BY A NOSE"
"BUT WHEN I'M MOOCHING..."
"...I'M UP SMELLING LIKE A ROSE!"

They'll Do It Every Time — by Al Scaduto


TV SCENES WE'D LIKE TO SEE—
OUR SOUFFLÉ IS ALL READY--NOW FOR THE TEST... HERE, JULIA.. TASTE IT...
BLEC-C-C-K-K-K-
THAT IS JUST AWFUL--UK-K-PTU-U-U...
Thanx to PATRICIA VIOLETTE, MILFORD, CT.
SCHOOL DAZE—
MY TEACHER IS NOT TOO SMART-- SHE'S BEEN IN THE SAME GRADE FOR TEN YEARS...
WHA--?
Thanx to JOY PARTAIN, HOUSTON, TEXAS
HOUSEHOLD MATH—
YORICK! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU TO CLEAN UP THIS ROOM?
DON'T YOU KNOW? I'D SAY ABOUT 922---NO.. 923 TIMES THAT YOU'VE TOLD ME, MOM...
Thanx to PATRICK ADELMAN, TARRYTOWN, N.Y.

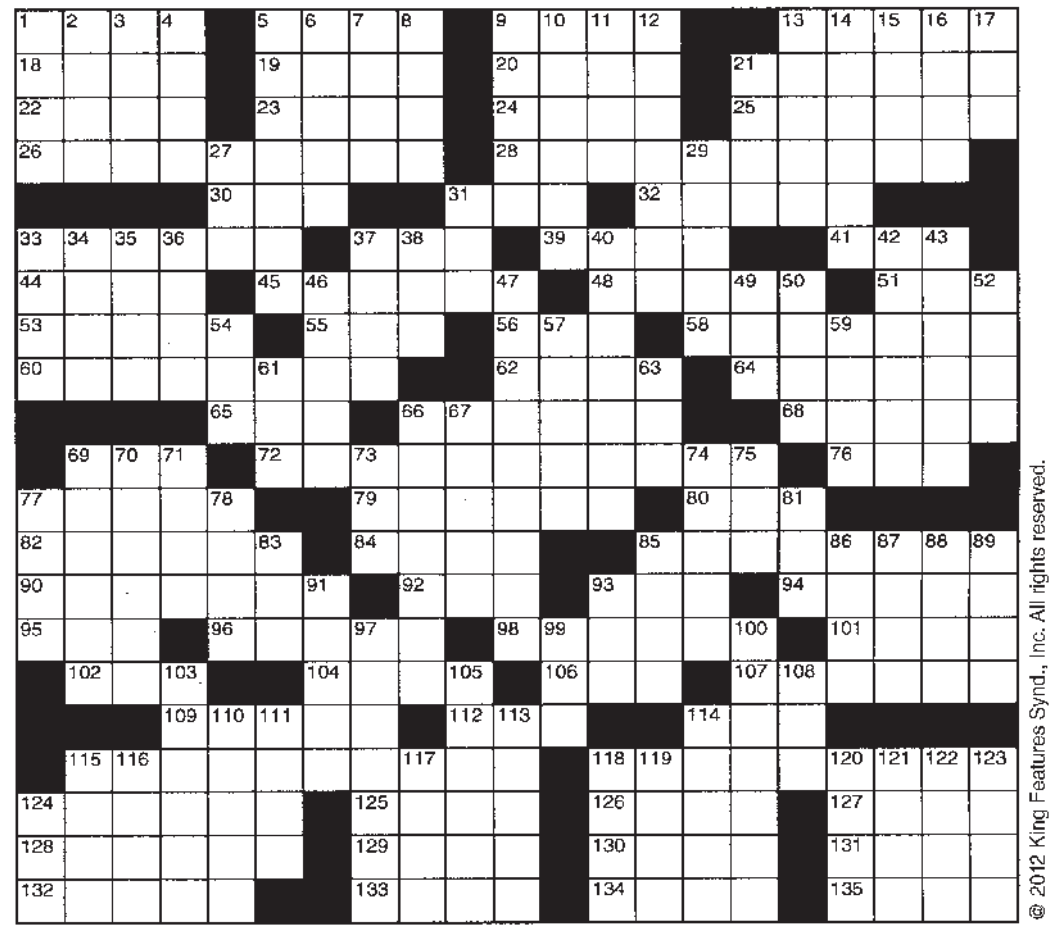


Super Crossword

FAUXCATIONS

ACROSS
1 Slightly open
5 Celt
9 Lose one's fur
13 Orchestra section
18 Ahmedabad attire
19 Voice type
20 Munich mister
21 Proof-of-purchase, often
22 Skip
23 Skeleton part
24 Proficient
25 Second Triumvirate member
26 Soda jerk?
28 Laundry CEO?
30 Revolutionary Guevara
31 Opie's aunt
32 Drawing room
33 "NYPD Blue" creator
37 — sauce
39 Dandelion or darnel
41 Neutral color
44 Soap additive
45 Charlotte, for one
48 Sacred song
51 Swell place?
53 Psychedelic Timothy
55 Wharton's "The — of Innocence"
56 Gram lead-in
58 Golf instructor?
60 Deli worker?
62 Shoot down
64 Tristan's tootsie
65 Qty.
66 Gimpel and Jong
68 Writer Rogers St. Johns
69 Existed
72 Gas station attendant?
76 Hook's mate
77 Criticizes
79 Mischievous
80 Mauna —
82 Dental appointment, e.g.
84 Manuscript imperative
85 Yacht peddler?
90 Roller coaster operator?
92 — Dawn Chong
93 Baby beaver
94 Record player
95 Actor Chaney
96 Attract the IRS?
98 Minnie of "Circle of Friends"
101 Sturdy trees
102 Inc., in England
104 Spare fare
106 Mrs. McKinley
107 Unrefined
109 "Midnight at the —" ('74 hit)
112 Joplin composition
114 Good buddy
115 Herpetologist?
118 Phrenologist?
124 Fiesta target
125 Bring to ruin
126 Austin or Garr
127 Fancy fabric
128 Starting point
129 Sentence pt.
130 Ornery Olympian
131 Spoken
132 Prevent
133 It may be spare
134 Writer Harte
135 Guarded

DOWN
1 Beginning on
2 Actress Gertz
3 Neighbor of Cal.
4 "Puttin' on the —" ('83 hit)
5 South American cowboys
6 TV's "Kate & —"
7 Italian rumbler
8 Bank offering
9 Contour
10 Semitic tongue
11 Perry's creator
12 Dons one's duds
13 Sonata movement
14 Range
15 College collar
16 "Stop!"
17 Sneak a peek
21 It's often jumped
27 Travel agcy.?
29 Egyptian statesman
31 "Later!"
33 Cinderella's soiree
34 Spread in a tub
35 Nag subtly
36 Towel word
37 Regret audibly
38 Wordsworth work
40 Certain inscription
42 One of the Judds
43 It's in the groove
46 Page or LaBelle
47 Waugh's "Brideshead —"
49 Fragrant neckwear
50 Butte
52 Surface measurement
54 Singer Sumac
57 Texas river
59 Cryptanalyst's concern
61 UN agency
63 City in Kyrgyzstan
66 New Haven hardwood
67 — -dope (Ali tactic)
69 Pop Art pioneer
70 Impassioned
71 "Graf —"
73 Fleur-de- —
74 Raise spirits?
75 Parisian potentate
77 Monastery garb
78 Computer command
81 Matterhorn, e.g.
83 Potok's "My Name Is Asher —"
85 Hindu deity
86 Restaurateur Toots
87 Ditch under a drawbridge
88 Egyptian symbol
89 Investigative
91 Chatter box?
93 Baby butter
97 Cause confusion
99 Fix a fight
100 Courbet, e.g.
103 Pharmacist's concern
105 Wall Street figure
108 Half and half?
110 Moving
111 Mikita of hockey
113 Battery part
114 Kind of soup
115 TV's "Spenser: For —"
116 "What's — for me?"
117 Cross inscription
118 Use a dagger
119 Gourmet Graham
120 Deere thing
121 Skater Lipinski
122 Epps or Sharif
123 Bank (on)
124 Seal school



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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

1. MOVIES: What is the first word spoken in "Citizen Kane"?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What two countries surround the Dead Sea?
3. PERSONALITIES: In what branch of the military service did actor James Stewart serve in World War II?
4. MUSIC: Who composed the music for the film "An American in Paris"?
5. HISTORY: In which Pacific island group did the United States test atomic bombs?
6. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is the name for a group of geese?
7. MEDICINE: What is scoliosis?
8. FAMOUS QUOTATIONS: Who once said, "Too much of a good thing is wonderful"?
9. CHEMISTRY: What metal is liquid at room temperature?
10. COMICS: In the comic strip "Peanuts," Shroeder is a fan of whose music?

Answers
1. "Rosebud"
2. Israel and Jordan
3. Air Force, as a pilot
4. George Gershwin
5. Marshall Islands (Bikini Atoll)
6. Gaggle
7. Abnormal curvature of the spine
8. Mae West
9. Mercury
10. Beethoven

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Saturday's Answers

The Spats — by Jeff Pickering

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- All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

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Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
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Superior Court, CNMI Judicial Branch
TINIAN and SAIPAN

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Superior Court is seeking **Deputy Clerk 1, Office of the Clerk of Court on the islands of TINIAN and SAIPAN.**

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: This position is under the general supervision of the Presiding Judge and the direct supervision of the Clerk of Court or his/her designee. The employee performs work in accordance with established policies, practices, and court procedures. The following are required duties: receives, reviews, and records documents filed for hearings; provides data entry of pleadings onto the court's case management system; provides daily updates of pleadings and other caseload information for assigned judge through the court's automated processes, including but not limited to the document imaging and online filing system; inspects physical and electronic documents submitted to court, including looking for accuracy, proper form, and conformance with court order or court rules; assesses fines, receives and accounts for monies, issues receipts, prepares deposit slips and provides disbursements per court order or requests from customer service window; prepares and maintains physical and electronic file folders for court cases, including tracking of all pleadings associated with individual cases files; serves as a courtroom clerk when court hearings are in session, including but not limited to swearing in of witnesses, logging of all admitted exhibits, tracking all phases of a hearing on an index sheet for the recording counter, operating the electronic recording equipment, and providing continuous monitoring of the recording equipment to ensure the integrity of the record; and, performs other related duties as assigned.

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GCA's January forensic winners
Overdrive
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a thrill to drive, but lacks the extras
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Davis, Dujardin win lead honors at SAG awards
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James, Heat pull away to 3-0 lead over Knicks

NEW YORK (AP)—Frustrated and foul-prone for three quarters, LeBron James finally did what he usually does at Madison Square Garden.

And the New York Knicks got the only result they know any more in the playoffs.

James scored 32 points, including eight straight to start the fourth quarter and break open the game, and the Miami Heat took a 3-0 series lead, sending the Knicks to an NBA postseason-record 13th straight loss, 87-70 on Thursday night.

"Bron came in and got at it right away," Dwyane Wade said. "He had an unbelievable fourth quarter."

James had 17 points in the final period for the Heat, who held the short-handed Knicks to eight field goals in the second half and will go for the sweep Sunday afternoon.

"He just has to stay with it," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "He had some turnovers, he had some mistakes but he was able to keep his head in it."

Wade added 20 points for the Heat and Mario Chalmers had 19, hitting consecutive 3-pointers in the fourth quarter when the Heat finally brought some beauty to what had been an ugly game.

Carmelo Anthony scored 22 points but shot 7 of 23 for the Knicks, who are playing without Amare Stoudemire, Jeremy Lin and Iman Shumpert and needed a super effort from Anthony that he didn't come close to providing.

The Knicks broke the record set by Memphis from 2004-06. They haven't won a playoff game since April 29, 2001, Game 3 of a best-of-five series against Toronto.

No NBA team has overcome a 3-0 deficit.

"It's a tough one. It's an uphill battle, but it's one we have to go through," center Tyson Chandler said. "Obviously no one wants to be in a hole 0-3, you know in the playoffs especially against a tough team like (Miami), but that's the way it is and we've got to keep fighting."

Chris Bosh had nine points and 10 rebounds hours after the birth of his first child. He flew to New York with the Heat on Wednesday, then quickly hopped on a flight back to Miami after learning his wife was in labor. He returned Thursday afternoon following the birth of his son, arriving at the arena about 30 minutes before the game.

In a sloppy game between two star-studded teams, Miami went 10 minutes without a field goal in the second half, followed by the Knicks managing just three baskets in the third quarter.

Then James, who finished with eight turnovers, took over.

He came off the bench to start the fourth after sitting most of the third in foul trouble, quickly providing the best offensive stretch in the game. He nailed a 3-pointer, followed his own miss, then hit again from behind the arc, turning the Heat's two-point lead into a 66-56 cushion with 10:36 remaining.

"He was in foul trouble," Bosh said. "He was struggling a little bit and he had pretty much the whole third quarter to think about what was going. I think that was good for him. I think it really built a desire in him a little bit and then he made sure we got off to a great start in the fourth quarter which was very important for us."

The Heat put it away midway through the period, when Wade made a jumper before Chalmers hit twice in a row from behind the arc to make it 77-62 with 5:40 to play.

Fans started leaving, realizing there was little hope of the Knicks making up 15 points on anybody with the lineup they have.

The Knicks shot 32 percent, getting a 5-for-18 night from JR Smith. New York shot 4 of 20 from 3-point range, with Smith missing all five.

"Offensively we just didn't have it," Knicks interim coach Mike Woodson said. "We were so stagnant and I got to take the heat for that."

Lin is practicing again after knee surgery but is not ready to return. Shumpert tore a knee ligament in Game 1, and Stoudemire is hoping the hand injury he sustained punching a fire extinguisher case following Game 2 is healed enough to let him play Sunday.

Desperate to see playoff success, Knicks fans were loud early, chanting "Beat the Heat! Beat the Heat!" but the Knicks gave them little to cheer about once the game started. They made one basket in the first 5 minutes and fell behind by as many as nine points, but then shut down the Heat from the field after Bosh's basket with 4:59 left and tied it at 19 by period's end.

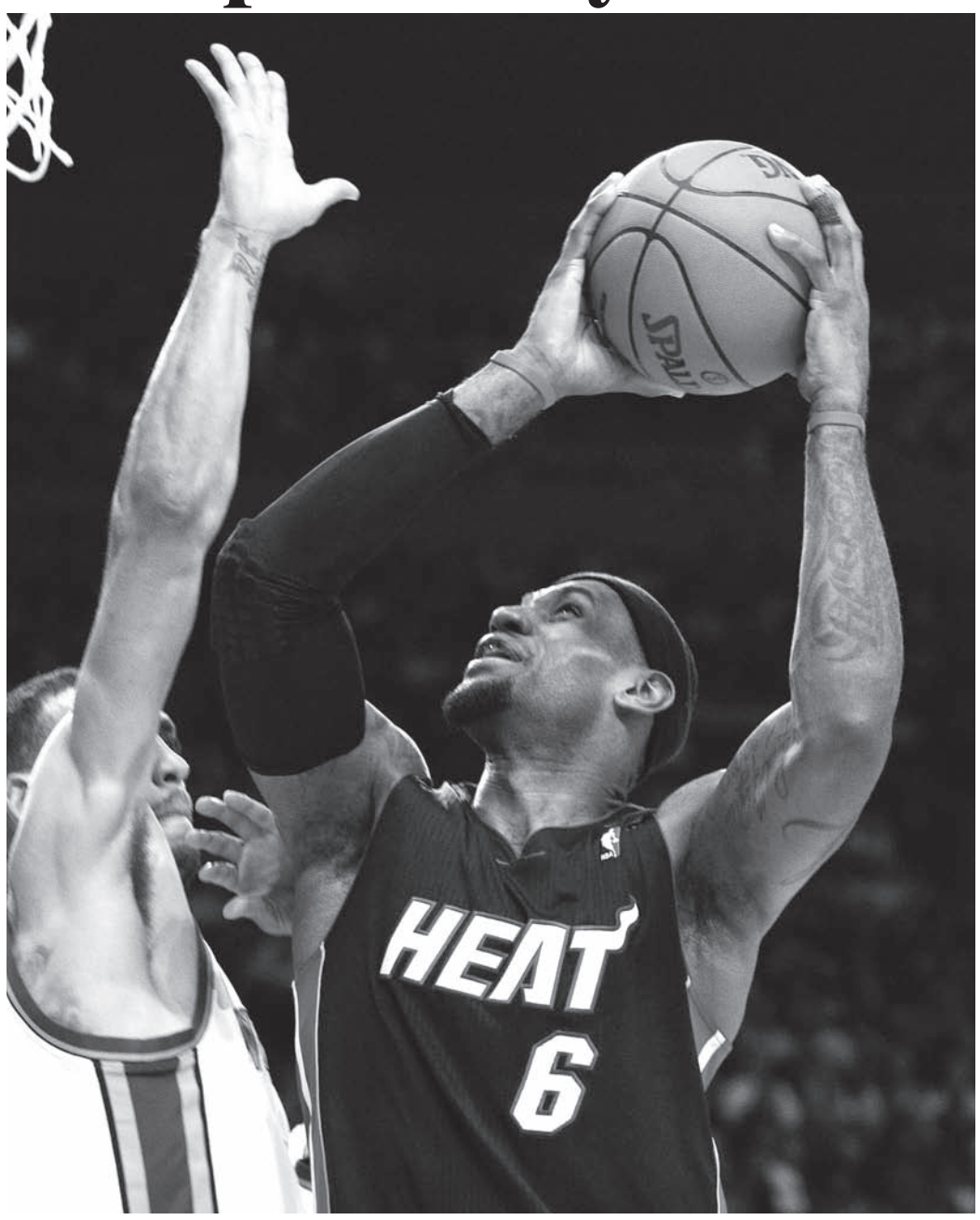
James came in averaging 29.9 points at the current Madison Square Garden, trailing only Michael Jordan and Kobe Bryant among opponents who played here at least 10 games. Wade was just behind in fourth with 27.3 per game.

Yet the superstars each started 1 of 6 from the field, James seeming particularly frustrated with the officials and even teammates. Once a fan favorite at Madison Square Garden—Knicks fans hoped he would sign here as a free agent in 2010—he was booed, mocked and cursed by the crowd Thursday.

He eventually would get on the roll he is accustomed to here.

The Heat won the opener by 33 points and took Game 2 104-94 on Monday, when the Knicks' biggest problems came after the game. Stoudemire punched a fire extinguisher case in the arena and badly cut his left hand, needing surgery Tuesday to repair a muscle. He sat on bench with his arm in a sling.

Steve Novak started for him but took only two shots and missed them both.



AP

New York Knicks forward Jared Jeffries, left, tries to block a shot by Miami Heat forward LeBron James (6) in the second half of Game 3 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series at Madison Square Garden in New York, Thursday, May 3, 2012.

Thunder 95, Mavericks 79

In Dallas, Oklahoma City never trailed on the way to a victory over Dallas that delivered a commanding 3-0 series lead over the defending NBA champs.

After two close games on their home court, the young Thunder ran away with Game 3.

They will run away with the first-round series with one more win. Game 4 is Saturday in Dallas.

Kevin Durant scored nine points in an early 3-minute span, including two 3-pointers and a 17-foot fadeaway, as Oklahoma City took a 14-7 lead.

Durant finished with 31 points on 11-of-15 shooting. The three-time NBA scoring champion was a combined 15 of 44 in the first two games of the series, though he had a game-winning jumper with 1.5 seconds in the opener.

Russell Westbrook added 20 points for the Thunder, while Serge Ibaka had 10 points and 11 rebounds and James Harden and Derek Fisher both had 10 points.

Dirk Nowitzki had 17 points to lead Dallas, and Jason Kidd had 12.

The Mavericks have a nearly impossible climb to avoid being the first defending champion knocked out in the first round of the playoffs since Miami five years ago.

No NBA team has ever come back from a 3-0 deficit to win a best-of-seven series.

Dallas coach Rick Carlisle became so irate at a perceived missed call in the first quarter that he had to be restrained by one of his assistant coaches.

Carlisle went ballistic, charging onto the court screaming and pointing at official Marc Davis. Replays showed Carlisle might have had a good argument, but he got called for a technical foul and Westbrook's free throw put the Thunder up 21-11, their first double-digit lead.

A couple of minutes later, Durant made his third 3-pointer of the first quarter to stretch the gap to 28-13.

Durant had 15 points by the end of the first quarter, but the Mavericks cut their deficit to 32-26. Vince Carter made two free throws, had a driving one-handed dunk and ended the quarter with a 3-pointer in the final 1:34 for Dallas.

After Dallas got within 32-28 starting the second quarter, the Thunder were again up by 15 after consecutive 3-pointers by Fisher and Westbrook and the game remained in the visitors' keeping.

Hawks worried about Josh Smith heading into Game 3

ATLANTA (AP)—The Atlanta Hawks are running out of players.

The team learned Wednesday that forward Josh Smith has a strained tendon in his left knee, perhaps costing the Hawks another key player for their playoff series against the Boston Celtics.

Smith is day-to-day and it's not known if he'll be able to go in Game 3 Friday night. While the injury doesn't sound as serious as some feared before he underwent an MRI, it's worth noting that Hawks center Zaza Pachulia is also considered day-to-day because of a sprained left foot—and he hasn't been on the court in nearly three weeks.

"I'm very concerned about it," coach Larry Drew said after the team held a brief shootaround and film session at Philips Arena. "I know Josh is a guy, that if he's just hurting, he's going to play. He has that kind of toughness. But if it's a situation where he can't play, then he won't be out there."

The Celtics evened the series 1-1 on Tuesday night, rallying in the fourth quarter for an 87-80 victory. Smith, who has battled tendinitis this season, appeared to be having trouble with his knee at several points in the game. He finally headed to the locker room with 4:20 remaining, and the Hawks' offense bogged down without his presence in the post.

Now, Atlanta is facing the prospect of trying to regain home-court advantage while missing its top two centers, Al Horford and Pachulia, and possibly Smith, who had taken over many of the offensive responsibilities in the lane after Horford went down early in the season with a torn pectoral muscle.

Smith averaged a career-best 18.8 points a game during the regular season. He led the Hawks to a Game 1 victory with 22 points and 18 rebounds, and followed with 16 points and 12 rebounds on Tuesday.

"He's just been so good for us," Drew said. "He's certainly a key component in order for us to have success. Obviously, we already have both centers out, and now we're looking at our starting power forward possibly being injured. These type of situations have been happening to us all year. We've been kind of snake-bit, but we're just hoping for the best."

Horford had wanted to return for the playoffs, but he's already ruled himself out of the entire first round. Pachulia took over as the starting center and did a solid job, but he was injured in mid-April and missed the last seven games of the regular season. The Hawks keep evaluating him on a daily basis, but he's still wearing a protective boot on his foot and there's no indication that he's close to returning.

"We've had a lot of bumps in the road this year, and we've been able to overcome them all," said Jason Collins, who's gone from third string to starting center. "This is just another one. There's a lot of guys on this team with a lot of playoff experience. If someone goes down, someone else steps right in."

But losing Smith for even one game would be a huge blow. Ivan Johnson, a 28-year-old rookie and most likely candidate to step in at power forward, has been a solid contributor off the bench but isn't likely to be nearly as effective Smith over long stretches. The Hawks got a glimpse of how tough it would be without J-Smoove when he left Game 2 with Boston clinging to a 74-72 lead.

Rivera tears ACL before Royals beat Yankees

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Mariano Rivera's career may have ended Thursday night, not while basking in the glow of adoring fans at Yankee Stadium, but in agonizing pain on the outfield grass before a few thousand fans in Kansas City.

Baseball's greatest closer tore a ligament in his right knee while shagging balls during batting practice before a game against the Royals, a devastating injury that will likely sideline the Yankees' 12-time All-Star for the remainder of the season.

"This is bad," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "There's no question about it."

The 42-year-old right-hander's leg caught on the field where the grass meets dirt, causing his knee to buckle. He fell into the outfield wall and down to the ground, where Rivera grimaced in pain as teammates and training staff ran out to see him.

Rivera was carted from the field and taken for an MRI exam. Royals physician Dr. Vincent Key diagnosed a torn ACL after examining the scans of the knee.

"I thought it wasn't that bad, but it's torn," Rivera said after the Yankees lost 4-3, pausing several times in the Yankees clubhouse to compose himself. "Have to fix it."

Rivera has said that he will decide after the season whether to retire, and while Girardi said he hoped that baseball's career saves leader with 608 would make a comeback, Rivera was noncommittal.

"At this point, I don't know," he said. "At this point, I don't know. Going to have to face this first. It all depends on how the rehab is going to happen, and from there, we'll see."

The injury cast a pall over the Yankees, who put the tying run on third base in the ninth before Mike Moustakas made a stellar play on a chopper by Alex Rodriguez, throwing him out at first to preserve the Royals' victory.

Afterward, the only thing on A-Rod's mind was Rivera.

"I saw it all go down," said Rodriguez, who uttered "Oh, my God," from behind the batting cage when Rivera went down. "Obviously it's a huge blow. Mo means so much to this team.

"It's hard to even talk about it tonight," Rodriguez said. "Mo means so much to us on a personal level, and on the field."

The outcome of the game was almost secondary for the Yankees, though that was hardly the case for Kansas City, which snapped a 10-game home losing streak.

Danny Duffy (2-2) went six strong innings before turning it over to the bullpen, and three relievers maintained a one-run lead until Jonathan Broxton came on to close the ninth.

AP

In this image taken from video, New York Yankees' Mariano Rivera, center, grimaces after twisting his right knee shagging fly balls during batting practice before a baseball game with the Kansas City Royals, Thursday, May 3, 2012, in Kansas City, Mo.

Rays 4, Mariners 3

In St. Petersburg, Florida, Tampa Bay's Jeff Keppinger hit a two-run homer to help the Rays to a 4-3 win over the Seattle Mariners, completing a four-game sweep.

Desmond Jennings added a two-run triple for the Rays, who scored all their runs in the second inning off Kevin Millwood (0-3).

Blue Jays 5, Angels 0

In Anaheim, Brandon Morrow pitched his second career shutout to steer Toronto over Los Angeles.

Morrow (3-1) won his third straight start, striking out eight and walking none to help the Blue Jays open an 11-game trip with their fifth win in six games.

J.P. Arencibia hit a three-run homer and Toronto added two more runs on a throwing error by converted third baseman Mark Trumbo.

Indians 7, White Sox 5

In Chicago, Jason Kipnis hit a three-run homer and finished with a career-high four RBIs, leading Cleveland over Chicago.

Kipnis, a native of suburban Chicago, also tripled in a run, walked and scored twice.

Cleveland starter Justin Masterson (1-2) picked up his first win of the season, holding the White Sox to three runs over 6 1-3 innings.

White Sox starter John Danks (2-4) allowed seven runs over seven innings.

Nationals 2, Diamondbacks 1

In Washington, Washington's Bryce Harper hit a tiebreaking double in the sixth inning, lifting the Nationals to victory over the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Washington starter Ross Detwiler (3-1) allowed one run over 6 1-3 innings in his longest outing this season.

Arizona starter Ian Kennedy (3-1) lost for the first time in 13 starts, snapping a personal nine-game winning streak.

Phillies 4, Braves 0

In Atlanta, Joe Blanton pitched his first shutout in five years to guide Philadelphia past Atlanta.

Blanton (3-3) did not walk a batter and had six strikeouts in his third career shutout.

Shane Victorino hit a two-run homer for the Phillies.

Braves starter Randall Delgado (2-3) allowed six hits in eight innings.

Pirates 6, Cardinals 3

In St. Louis, Erik Bedard struck out a season-high 11, including a team-record seven in a row as Pittsburgh set a club mark by fanning 17 batters in the win over St. Louis.

Bedard (2-4) was pulled after five innings but Pittsburgh's relievers kept piling up the strikeouts—the 17 Ks were the most by Pittsburgh in a nine-inning game since 1900, the team said in citing research by the Elias Sports Bureau. Cardinals starter Jake Westbrook (3-2) gave up four runs in 6 1-3 innings.

Marlins 3, Giants 2

In San Francisco, pitcher Anibal Sanchez allowed only one run in seven innings to steer Miami to a tight win over San Francisco.

Sanchez (2-0) struck out five and walked only one batter.

Hanley Ramirez drove in a pair of runs without a hit for the Marlins, who completed a three-game sweep.

Reds 4, Cubs 3, 10 innings

In Cincinnati, the hosts scored three runs in the ninth to tie the game, then Scott Rolen hit a sacrifice fly in the 10th to give Cincinnati victory over Chicago.

Cubs closer Carlos Marmol walked three of the five batters he faced, one with the bases loaded. He has blown three of his five save chances, walking 12 in 8 2-3 innings.

Chicago starter Ryan Dempster returned from injury and pitched eight shutout innings on his 35th birthday to be in line for his first win over the season before Marmol blew it.

Simpson in 3-way tie for lead at Quail Hollow

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Webb Simpson was nervous playing in the same group with Tiger Woods. It sure didn't show Thursday in the Wells Fargo Championship.

Simpson chipped in from 35 yards in front of the par-4 eighth green for eagle, and then made Woods shake his head and smile when he holed a 60-foot birdie putt that might have rolled off the 12th green if the cup didn't get in the way. It led to a 7-under 65 for a share of the lead Thursday with Stewart Cink and Ryan Moore.

"I was nervous playing with Tiger. I prayed a lot out there," said Simpson, who lives about a mile away from Quail Hollow and already was on edge about trying to perform well for the neighbors. "Once I made a couple birdies, I kind of enjoyed it."

There was a lot to like for just about everyone on a steamy day in Carolina. With temperatures pushing 90 and barely a breeze, scoring conditions were so ideal that even par was over the cut line going into the second round. The average score was 71.72, the lowest for the first round in the 10-year history of the tournament.

Woods failed to take advantage. In his first tournament since a tie for 40th at the Masters—his worst performance as a pro at Augusta National—he made too many mistakes early and had to one-putt three of the last four greens for a 71.

"I've got to obviously not make those little mistakes like that tomorrow," Woods said. "We've got a long way to go, and we've got some rain coming probably on the weekend, so we're going to have to go get it."

So many others did just that, including Cink, who has been mired in a slump. He ended an already solid day with three straight birdies, holing a 20-foot putt on the ninth for his lowest round of the year. Moore also birdied his last three holes.

Rickie Fowler, still searching for his first PGA Tour win in his third full season, led a group of five players at 66 that included Patrick Reed, the 21-year-old from Augusta State who has Monday qualified to get in the last two tournaments.

The scoring was so low that about one-quarter of the field shot in the 60s, and half of them broke par.

"I think any time you get tour players in 90-degree weather with not much wind, it's naturally going to soften out the greens," Simpson said. "I think you've seen over the years, the hotter it is and the less wind there is, the scores are going to be really good. And I think that's what happened. They can't get the greens too firm with this weather. It will just burn them out."

He didn't have much of an explanation for his own golf, considering he had only two rounds in the 60s in his previous three starts at Quail Hollow. Plus, there was that apprehension about playing with Woods, and the large crowd the 14-time major champion attracts.

The only other time Simpson played with Woods didn't last long. It was the final round of Doral this year, where Simpson jokingly said, "I accidentally kicked him in the leg and he withdrew." Woods left after 11 holes that day with tightness in his left Achilles tendon, which raised questions about his future until Woods won two weeks later at Bay Hill.

Eleven holes at Doral at least gave Simpson a taste of what to expect.

"We went from 10,000 people every hole to zero people," he said.

Thousands of fans on a scorching day at Quail Hollow followed them around all afternoon, with Simpson and Geoff Ogilvy (71) in tow. Simpson is the one who generated most of the cheers. He stuffed his tee shot on the par-3 second and his approach on the third to inside 3 feet for birdies, holed a birdie putt just inside 30 feet on the sixth, and then chipped in for his eagle at No. 8.

Simpson joined the morning leaders with a 15-foot birdie putt on the 11th, but no birdie was more unlikely than No. 12. His tee shot went into the right rough, and because of trees blocking the flight of his ball, hit a low bullet that ran up the hill to the back side of the green, leaving him a 60-foot putt that swung sharply to the left and ran quickly away from him.

He was trying to get it within about 6 feet of the hole, and it dove into the cup. Simpson flung his belly putter to the ground and laughed, which is about all he could think of to do.

"I play here a lot, and I knew where I hit it was pretty dead," he said. "So, yeah, I'll take it."

Phil Mickelson recovered from a tee shot that went out-of-bounds and led to triple bogey and shot 71. Rory McIlroy, who earned his first PGA Tour win at Quail Hollow two years ago by closing with a 62, birdied three of the par 5s but three-putted from 18 feet on the 18th hole and had to settle for a 70.

Fowler led the parade of good scoring in the morning with a round of 66 that was so flawless he never came close to a bogey. He had a birdie putt on all but one green, and the longest putt he had for par was 4 feet. He hit 6-iron to the front pin—a tiny target—on the par-5 seventh hole for an eagle, then birdied three of his last four holes.

Fowler has become a fan favorite, especially with young kids in their orange attire, but he still doesn't have what matters. Fowler is not nearly as concerned as everyone else about his 0-71 mark on the PGA Tour. He won the Korea Open last year by beating McIlroy, and he feels as though his game is headed in the right direction.

"I feel that I'm good enough to win," Fowler said. "I definitely feel like the amount of people expecting or thinking that I can win is a compliment. I'm not too worried about the talk that goes on about when my first win is coming, but it's my main goal, and that's what I'm focused on."

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	17	8	.680	–
Baltimore	16	9	.640	1
Toronto	14	11	.560	3
New York	13	11	.542	3 1/2
Boston	11	13	.458	5 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	12	10	.545	–
Chicago	12	12	.500	1
Detroit	12	12	.500	1
Kansas City	7	16	.304	5 1/2
Minnesota	6	18	.250	7

West Division

Texas	17	8	.680	–
Oakland	13	13	.500	4 1/2
Seattle	11	15	.423	6 1/2
Los Angeles	10	15	.400	7

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Washington	16	9	.640	–
Atlanta	15	11	.577	1 1/2
New York	13	12	.520	3
Philadelphia	13	13	.500	3 1/2
Miami	11	14	.440	5

Central Division

St. Louis	16	9	.640	–
Cincinnati	12	12	.500	3 1/2
Houston	11	14	.440	5
Milwaukee	11	14	.440	5
Pittsburgh	11	14	.440	5
Chicago	9	16	.360	7

West Division

Los Angeles	17	8	.680	–
Arizona	13	13	.500	4 1/2
Colorado	12	12	.500	4 1/2
San Francisco	12	13	.480	5
San Diego	9	17	.346	8 1/2

WELLS FARGO SCORES

FIRST ROUND

Ryan Moore	32-33—65
Stewart Cink	31-34—65
Webb Simpson	31-34—65
Rickie Fowler	33-33—66
John Senden	32-34—66
D.A. Points	33-33—66
Brian Davis	31-35—66
Patrick Reed	32-34—66
Billy Mayfair	33-34—67
Brendon de Jonge	33-34—67
Brian Harman	34-33—67
Tommy Gainey	35-33—68
Kevin Stadler	34-34—68
Martin Flores	34-34—68
Seung-Yul Noh	36-32—68
Jonas Blixt	34-34—68
Jeff Overton	34-34—68
Hunter Haas	32-36—68
Arjun Atwal	34-34—68
Vijay Singh	33-35—68
Rocco Mediate	35-33—68
Nick Watney	35-33—68
Alexandre Rocha	35-33—68
Roberto Castro	33-35—68
Dicky Pride	33-36—69
Josh Teater	36-33—69
Chris DiMarco	34-35—69
Aaron Baddeley	33-36—69
Jonathan Byrd	35-34—69
Ben Curtis	34-35—69
Robert Garrigus	35-34—69
Jimmy Walker	34-35—69
Ryuji Imada	35-34—69
Sang-Moon Bae	35-34—69
Danny Lee	35-34—69
Cameron Tringale	36-33—69
Heath Slocum	35-34—69
Carl Pettersson	33-36—69
Jeff Maggert	35-35—70
Rory Sabbatini	34-36—70
Robert Allenby	34-36—70
Zach Johnson	36-34—70
Keegan Bradley	37-33—70
Kyle Stanley	33-37—70
Garth Mulroy	34-36—70
Andres Romero	34-36—70
David Hearn	34-36—70
George McNeill	37-33—70
Jason Day	35-35—70
Rory McIlroy	35-35—70
Ben Crane	35-35—70
John Merrick	37-33—70
Richard H. Lee	33-37—70
Harris English	33-37—70
Kyle Reifers	35-35—70
Chez Reavie	35-36—71
Bill Lunde	35-36—71
Charles Howell III	36-35—71
Brendan Steele	36-35—71
Johnson Wagner	36-35—71
Phil Mickelson	36-35—71
Lee Westwood	34-37—71
Joe Ogilvie	33-38—71
Steve Wheatcroft	36-35—71
James Driscoll	35-36—71
J.B. Holmes	33-38—71
Robert Karlsson	38-33—71
Sung Kang	35-36—71
Michael Thompson	37-34—71
Camilo Villegas	34-37—71
Angel Cabrera	36-35—71
Mike Weir	35-36—71
Tiger Woods	37-34—71
Geoff Ogilvy	36-35—71
Jim Furyk	36-35—71
Greg Owen	34-37—71
Daniel Summerhays	36-35—71
Will Claxton	37-34—71
Kyle Thompson	37-34—71
Ken Duke	36-36—72
Chad Campbell	37-35—72
Stuart Appleby	35-37—72
Retief Goosen	35-37—72
Lucas Glover	34-38—72
Kevin Chappell	36-36—72
Kevin Kisner	36-36—72
Gavin Coles	37-35—72
Spencer Levin	37-35—72
Brandt Jobe	38-34—72
Jhonattan Vegas	36-36—72
Cameron Beckman	34-38—72
Sean O'Hair	38-34—72
Martin Laird	37-35—72
Patrick Sheehan	36-36—72
Pat Perez	38-35—73
Chris Stroud	37-36—73
J.J. Killeen	37-36—73
Tim Clark	37-36—73
Bill Haas	35-38—73
Kevin Na	38-35—73

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two-way tie for 1st in Agingan Division

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Shark Attack team members, seen here in a file photo, downed Joe's Steakhouse's Fotten Palau at home in Wild Bill's Bar & Grill to move into the three-way tie for fourth place in SBA's Obyan Division.

Jonny's Bar & Grill's IT&E-Voyagers and Poseidon's Docomo Pacific-Home Boyz are knotted up in first place in Saipan Billiards Association's five-team Agingan Division after the conclusion of Tuesday's 2012 Budweiser Open 8-Ball League matchups.

Meanwhile, Jonny's Team SCS has a three-game edge over the nine-team Obyan Division.

Docomo-Home Boyz clipped IT&E-Voyagers, 9-8, on the road to move them into a share of the lead. Both teams now hold identical win-loss cards of 150-54.

Ten games back and alone in third place is Joe's Steakhouse's New Saipan Aluminum-Hustlers (140-64) after it survived Obyan's Titans (98-106) in an inter-league road match held at the 19th Hole Bar & Grill, while fourth place IT&E Incredibles skunked its Obyan sister team, Boom Boom (42-162), 17-0, in an inter-league home draw at Bammy's Restaurant Bar & Grill.

Joe's Ocean Warriors (110-94), meanwhile, barely got away from Jonny's Crazy 8 (97-107), 9-8, in inter-league play at home.

Current Obyan Division leader Team SCS defeated 19th Hole's seventh-ranked Poksu (66-138), 10-7, at home to improve to 103-101.

Second-ranked Yang-Ku (100-104) trampled The Water Front (44-160), 16-1, at home in Poseidon and Shark Attack (97-107) downed Joe's Fotten Palau (97-107), 11-6, at home in Wild Bill's Bar & Grill. The Titans, Crazy 8, and Fotten Palau are all deadlocked in the middle of the pack.

Saures wins April Ace

Refaluwasch Golf Association president Joe Saures finally hit paydirt, winning the club's April Ace last April 21 at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort.

He now joins fellow monthly winners Ki Soo Kim, Jordan Kosam, and Tony Rogolifoi in the season-ending RGA Club Championship.

RGA, meanwhile, will be holding its qualifying tournament for its May Ace tomorrow, May 6, at the Marianas Country Club in Marpi.

Tournament chair Jess Wabol said show time is set for 10:30am with 11:30am tee off. All members are encouraged to take part in the tourney as only eight monthly ace winners are left to be determined.

For more information, contact Wabol at 288-1129, Suares at 483-5506, or Kosam at 483-4506. Inquiries can also be emailed to cnmirga@gmail.com. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

SSHS

From Page 28

Keanah Deleon Guerrero all came around to score.

The Lady Dolphins then countered again in the top of the sixth to tie it up at 6-all.

Jayna Lizama drove in Ann Carico a second time and was moved around and in by Ursula Lizama, but Lady Manta Rays pitcher Cathy Amandus bit down and clawed out of the inning.

Amandus later led off the bottom half with a base hit, but was stranded at third base and the match went into bonus frames.

Both teams stood their ground through the seventh inning and MHS' Florita Billy powered home Jayna Lizama for the go-ahead run before being denied access to the plate by SSHS catcher Deleon Guerrero.

Billy sprinted home from third base as teammate Nicole Beltau dribbled a grounder down the left side to SSHS' Joseph who fired home to prevent the run.

SSHS' Amandus bobbled the ball as she moved in to cover the plate, but Deleon Guerrero was there all along and picked up the ball just in time to absorb a hard collision at the plate.

She held strong and raised the ball in the air for all to see what was actually her second snub of the game.

SSHS' Amandus caught a pop up to finish the portion and later delivered the final blow in the bottom frame.

MHS pitcher Jayna Lizama was battling hard in the late half of the match, but she issued two walks in the bottom of the eighth to give their rivals a considerable advantage.

She proved to be a fighter though and retired the next two batters, but it was a good time for the Lady Manta Rays' top of the order to show up as leadoff batter Amandus stepped in and crushed a walk-off smash for the win.

Amandus ripped a two hopper off the fence in left centerfield and trotted all the way home although once she touched first base the game was over as soon as Dayna Pena and Stephanie Espayo crossed the dish.

Lady Dolphins 9, Lady Knights 8

After breaking the ice with two runs in the second inning the visiting Lady Knights built a commanding 7-0 lead in the third off five hits.

MCS' Michelle Kautz, Amy Taylor, Rikky Camacho, Ryann Yamagata, and Jasmine Che all came around to score.

MHS' defense made a stand in the top of the fourth and pulled within two runs in the bottom frame off six hits.

Lady Manta Rays' Nicole Beltau, Ann Carico, Sabrina Pangelinan, and Jayna Lizama all struck with consecutive hits and made it home. Shanna Flores started the surge after reaching with a fielder's choice.

Then MHS' Yamagata and Che hooked up with a couple of hits in the top of the fifth inning, but SSHS got it back in the bottom of the sixth from a pair of base rips by Judy Ngirbabul and Florita Billy that scored Maryann Waing.

MHS pitcher Jayna Lizama dealt her second 1-2-3 inning in a row to close the seventh inning and her team rallied back to tie the game at 8-all in the bottom frame.

Pangelinan and Waing delivered a trio of hits that scored Carico and Pangelinan before MCS pitcher Kaylani Lebria got away from the inning with the bases loaded.

SSHS' thick of the order came up empty in the clutch and the Lady Manta Rays pulled off the comeback with a walk-off double by Pangelinan. Carico skipped home for the win.

Pangelinan batted 4-for-5 with two runs; Carico scored three times.

NETTERS

From Page 28

2012 Female Student Athlete of the Month after topping three divisions in the PIC Tennis Championships—the women's singles open, women's doubles open, and mixed doubles.

Minor captured her fifth straight women's singles championship after a straight-set win over fellow junior player Mikayla Lopez, 6-4, 6-3.

She then teamed up with Cruz to upend Quan and Mikayla Lopez, 1-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-4), in the mixed doubles finals.

In the women's open doubles, the Saipan Southern High School student joined forces with former junior player Vivian Lee and the two triumphed over Guam's Michelle Pang and Saipan's Lydia Tan in the finals, 6-4, 6-1.

Cajigan, meanwhile, claimed the 2012 April Male Student Athlete plum after winning the boys 15-and-under and the men's 4.0 singles crowns of the PIC netfest.

The Grace Christian Academy student swept Chang Whan Jang in the finals of the men's 4.0, 6-3, 6-2. Scores for his U15 win were not available.

Bowling's Taitano took the 2012 April Female Athlete of the Month award after winning the Saipan Bowling Association/Budweiser Queen of the Lanes last month.

Taitano, who only joined the second day of the tournament, rolled a four-game total of 698 pinfalls. She had her best showing in Game 2, recording 191 pinfalls and tallied 178, 176, and 153 in the three other games for an average of 174.50.

Montgomery, Minor, and Cajigan were nominated by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association, while Taitano was Saipan Bowling Association's bet for the monthly awards.

NMISF

From Page 28

contact Hirsh at arcnmi@pticom.com for more information.

FINA stands for Fédération Internationale de Natation and is the international federation recognized by the International Olympic Committee for administering international competition in the aquatic sports. Its name translated from French is "International Swimming Federation.

It is one of several international federations which administers a given sport/discipline for the IOC and/or international community. It is based in Lausanne, Switzerland.

It currently oversees competition in five aquatic sports: swimming, diving, synchronized swimming, water polo, and open water swimming.

DICKINSONS

From Page 28

eight laps to Jude Dickinson's five, while Catalla's HPI Blitz settled for third place in 6:19:16 ahead of Leo Gatus, Jude Boy, and Jojo Sarach.; Paul Salalila's 26.19 also marked the fastest lap time.

It was all Paul Salalila in the Open-Class short course finals as his Kyosho Ultima SC held strong for 12 of 14 laps against Catalla. However, Jude Dickinson's Team LOSI XXX-SCT was awarded second place.

Although coming up a little short, Catalla still took the Open-Main pole for the month and managed to lead the other two laps.

Gatus finished two laps off the lead, while Saracho had a rough run and had to bow out after just three laps.

In addition, James Salalila's Kyosho Ultima SC dominated the Young Gun feature and swept both top qualifier and first place honors.

He beat out Adam Salalila's Team Associated SC10 and third placer Jacob Malonzo's TraXXas Slash.

Then in the B-Main event, Butter Dickinson outran top qualifier Lenmark Diaz for the checkered flag and Franz Decena rounded out the third spot. All three drivers wielded TraXXas Slash trucks.

There are over 20 active SRCR members, and growing, which regularly take part in practices every Sunday in the As Lito track.

The group tries to hold a daylong monthly event in their four racing categories. The public is welcome to check out the track and learn more about the sport/hobby.

Contact SRCR's Rodney Catalla at 256-7119 for more information.

Rivera tears ACL before Royals beat Yankees

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

James, Heat pull away to 3-0 lead over Knicks

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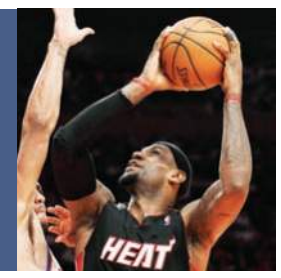

SSHS rallies past MHS in girls softball

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Saipan Southern High School eked out an 8-7 comeback victory the Marianas High School in last Wednesday's Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization girls fast-pitch softball match held at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

The win evened out the Lady Manta Rays' win-loss record at 2-1, while the Lady Dolphins hold a 1-3 card.

MISO

It was a tough break for the Lady Dolphins, who had just grinded out a 9-8 rally win of their own against the Mount Carmel School Lady Knights (0-3) last Monday.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Saipan Southern High School catcher Keanah Deleon Guerrero, left, holds up the ball after taking a big hit at the plate from Marianas High School's Florita Billy in Wednesday's MISO girls fast-pitch softball game at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

The season continues at the Tan Ge Field today at 4pm with the Lady Rays squaring off against the Lady Knights. Kagman High School's undefeated Lady Ayuyus sit atop the standings with a handful of wins.

Lady Manta Rays 8, Lady Dolphins 7

Four walks that started the third inning put SSHS ahead, 3-2, in the bottom of the third inning after both teams brought around two runs in the second frame, but MHS regrouped and pulled in front, 4-3, in the top of the fourth off three hits.

Lady Dolphins' Ana Caracao led off with a double and was driven home.

The Lady Manta Rays, however, fired back with three runs in the fifth inning off two hits and two walks. SSHS' Tara Ramon, Jaylinne Joseph, and

See SSHS on Page 27

Montgomery

Minor

Cajigan

Netters dominate April awards

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

CNMI tennis players won three-fourths of the Athlete of the Month honors up for grabs in April.

During Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association's monthly meeting last Thursday, local sports association officials voted tennis' Todd Montgomery, Thea Minor, and Christopher Cajigan and bowling's Lala Taitano as April's best athletes.

ATHLETES of the MONTH

Montgomery got the nod for 2012 April Male Athlete of the Month after winning the men's singles open and men's doubles open of the 12th Annual PIC Tennis Championships.

Montgomery won the men's singles championship after surviving ex-Micronesian Games teammate Bobby Cruz in the finals, 7-5, 2-6, 6-3.

The former University of Kansas NCAA player then partnered with another Micro Games teammate, Tim Quan, to take the men's open doubles crown.

Montgomery and Quan beat Cruz and top junior player Christian Miller in the finals, 6-3, 7-5.

Minor, for her part, won the

See NETTERS on Page 27

Dickinsons, Salalilas highlight SRCR April races

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The Dickinson duo of Jude and Butter as well as Paul Salalila and greenhorn James Salalila all shined in the Saipan Radio Control Racers monthly April races held last Sunday at the club track in As Lito.

The group also welcomed new father-and-son members Bernard and Jacob Malonzo into the mix.

Jude Dickinson triumphed in the A-Main 1/10 electric stock class short course and Butter Dickinson was victorious in the B-Main category, while Rodney Catalla and James Salalila came away as the winners in the Open-Main and Young Gun races, respectively.

Jude Dickinson came in as the top qualifier in the A-Main preliminaries and his Traxxas Slash car edged out Paul Salalila's after 13 laps by less than four-tenths of a second for a photo finish at 6:15:59.

Paul Salalila (6:15:94) led

See DICKINSONS on Page 27

NMISF to host 2012 FINA officiating clinic

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation will host the Saipan 2012 FINA Officiating Swim Clinic from May 15 to 19 at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

FINA Water is Our World

NMISF is the governing body for swimming in the CNMI and its members include the Saipan Swim Club and Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan.

Federation president John Hirsh said FINA Technical Swimming Committee chair Don Blew from Australia will run the clinic.

The clinic will include the following topics: Introduction to Swimming officiating; Approach to being top swimming officials; Competition conduct; Stroke rules; and Duties of timekeepers, recorders, starter, judges of stroke, inspector of turns, finish judges, referee, and announcer.

Hirsh said the event is open to any adult 18 years and older who is interested in aquatics in the Commonwealth.

Interested persons should

See NMISF on Page 27

WWW.FINA.ORG

Kwajalein and Ebeye swimming officials listen to FINA Technical Swimming Committee chair Don Blew during a clinic in 2010.